CHARTING THE FUTURE:

A Report on the Future of Loyola University of Chicago Libraries

APPENDIX I:
Report of Library Site Visits

Prepared by the Task Force on the Future of University Library Services
August 2005
REPORT OF LIBRARY SITE VISITS
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During the summer of 2005 members of the Task Force on the Future of University Library Services visited four recently constructed library facilities: Valparaiso University Library, Marquette University Library, Naperville Public Library and Oak Park Public Library.

ACADEMIC LIBRARY VISITS

Valparaiso University Library

The Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources, dedicated in September 2004, was designed as a gathering place for campus and community users. Located in the center of the VU campus, west of the Chapel of the Resurrection, the Christopher Center is a four-story 105,000 square foot state-of-the-art learning center. It encourages collaborative study, conversation, community gatherings, extensive computer use, and it provides a commanding view of the campus.

VU has done a nice job of responding to a number of library issues that the Task Force has discussed and some of the photos below are examples of that response. Unlike many other libraries, the Christopher Center has several entrances. The main entrance on the second floor leads from outside into a 4,000 sq. ft. community room where meetings and other events can be held. The area can accommodate 250 for dinner and there are large and small food service galleys for this area. Since it is adjacent to the library, security is such that it can be locked or unlocked for after library hour groups.

The Board of Directors Room is adjacent to the community room and functions in much the same manner. It seats 30 and features data ports for Internet access.

A circulation desk can be found at each of the library’s several entrances (one of the first floor and another on the east side of the building near the first floor café) for easy checkout and return of books, and to help maintain security for library materials.

Behind the main circulation desk on the first floor is the automated retrieval system (ARS), a combination of robotic and computer technology that locates and delivers books in about 15 seconds. More than 60,000 such materials are currently stored in 1,872 bins.
in the two-story storage area that has a capacity for some 300,000 items. Standard library shelving stores 10-15 volumes/sq.ft, compact shelving stores 20-30 volumes/sq.ft. and the ARS stores 175-250 volumes/sq.ft.

Users can request items stored in the ARS via library computers. The items are automatically delivered to the circulation area and put on hold for the user to pick up. Although its installation cost approximately $1.3 million, it appears to be economically efficient and over time its yearly maintenance cost when compared to standard shelving results in considerable savings. This might be an option that should be considered for Cudahy at a future date. Faculty would spend less time looking for books as the chances of them being placed in a wrong shelf would probably go down. Interestingly, barcoded books do not necessarily go into the bin they come from. Thus, not all physics books would be together even if we started that way.

VU has done a commendable job of designing the library with the user in mind. For example, the reference area has both printed materials on low shelves and electronic resources. Reference librarians are on hand during center hours to assist. The reference area also houses a classroom where software training and library instruction can be given to 25 participants. Another larger classroom can accommodate up to 40 users. All the classrooms boast computers and Internet access. Like most modern libraries wireless connectivity is ubiquitous.

Each area of the library has a mix of study tables and soft furniture. Unlike most libraries, VU eliminated the study carrels and went with lounge furniture to encourage students to study in groups. Groupings of comfortable furniture and collaboration rooms in various sizes permit 2 to 24 to work together. Computers surrounded by restaurant booth-style seating further encourage this concept. There are also private alcoves with either desk and chair or soft furniture where students can be isolated if they wish, but still visible to friends passing by.

Three of the floors feature Fireplace Lounges with living room settings of soft furniture centered on a fireplace.
Grinder’s Café, located on the first floor, sells a variety of coffees (such as lattes and cappuccinos) as well as sandwiches, bagels, muffins and fresh fruit. We were told this is very popular and brings in about $1,200 a day. Café-style tables provide seating and a place where users can read.

The library’s recreation reading collections, where users can find the latest fiction and non-fiction, are located right across from the café.

An open-air terrace is on the center’s fourth floor and overlooks Resurrection Meadow and the Chapel. The area features patio-style tables and chairs and is shaded from the sun by a unique roof with slats. In fact, this sun-screening element is one of the unique and most notable features of the building. The concrete structure around the library keeps direct sunlight from heating up the library, especially study areas near the glass walls, and provides some additional security around the library (for those who might want to toss things from the balcony) since this landscaping makes it is difficult for people to stand directly under the balcony.

The marriage of library services and information technology can be found throughout the Christopher Center that also houses the university’s Office of Electronic Information Services. The building has some 2,400 data ports for the Internet and 88 wireless access points. The technology help desk is combined with the library circulation desk on the first floor of the building and there is also a computer center where staff assist students in the use of software programs. In the Campus Writing Center, this same combination of services helps students improve writing skills and provides technological as well as staff assistance.

Other areas of the center include:
- The Media Center includes media viewing rooms and the library’s media collection. The Media Center is located near the recreation reading section and Grinder’s Café.
- Each floor has a large alcove where users can make copies. Two of these alcoves
feature lockers and stand-up computers. The first floor copy room also has vending machines.

- A Faculty Study Room is located on the fourth floor. Faculty study carrels tend to be under utilized so VU’s solution is a faculty study area that has a lounge area, computers, and individual lockers (look under the window in the photo) for faculty. This room is located across from the administration and IT offices so faculty can get assistance readily.
- An Archives and Special Collections Reading Room is located on the third floor. The library’s archivist also has offices here.

The Christopher Center for Library and Information Resources was designed by Esherick, Homsey, Dodge and Davis architects of San Francisco and Chicago at a cost of approximately $33 million. Nearly half of the construction costs were covered by a donation from the Christopher family of Hinsdale, Ill. Other funds for the project were from private donations and from a federal grant for technology.

**Marquette University Library**

The John P. Raynor, S.J. Library, which opened August 4, 2003, offers research services, sources and technology in a state-of-the-art facility designed around the Information Commons concept. The library incorporates in an open setting a variety of print and electronic resources, technology to support new forms of digital scholarship, areas for group and individual work, and a variety of staff to provide assistance. The building also houses Special Collections and University Archives, a conference center, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Norman H. Ott Memorial Writing Center and library administration.

The library, which is a structural steel building with metal decking and block and brick walls, was constructed at a cost of $55 million for construction, equipment and maintenance endowment. About $11 million is dedicated to a maintenance endowment. The library has 126,813 square feet of floor space including the Opus North Bridge. There are 230 wired computers, 15 circulating laptops and wireless access throughout the library. This space provides seating for 1,108, including 90+ in the café and 106 in the Conference Center, 14,000 cubic feet of climate controlled storage space for Special Collections manuscripts, archives, rare books, and photographs. Other interesting features of the library include over 60% or approximately 80,000 square feet of raised
flooring that permits easy redeployment of electrical and computer wiring and 274 windows including 11,600 square feet of glass.

The new library is connected to the old library by an elevated bridge which also houses the Brew @ the Bridge Café. The café has been such a success with users that the student center has complained that it has taken a notable portion of its business away and has probably contributed to the nickname for the library, “Club Ray”. The Café does have some acoustical problems that the current carpeting hasn’t successfully addressed. One corner of the café contains a large screen TV that is almost always tuned to CNN news. This and other closed circuit TVs are in many locations on the campus and update students on campus events, the weather, news, etc.

The designers have done a nice job of transitioning the old library facility (Memorial) to the new facility (Raynor) with a mix of comfortable seating and group study spaces. The older facility contains a large quiet reading room for those who find the noise of the newer facility too distracting. The addition of the new facility also permitted the conversion of older stack areas into compact shelving. All the compact shelving is manual rather than electrical and seems to work quite well. Also housed in the older facility are a number of faculty study carrels. In contrast to Valparaiso, Marquette opted to keep its faculty study carrels that were renovated and upgraded during the construction process. This marriage of an older library facility and a newer one is well done and is a model that would seem to hold great potential for Loyola.

The Information Commons concept dominates the overall design of the new facility. When one enters the library via the main entrance, the user is immediately drawn to the main information services desk that dominates the main floor. Radiating away from the information service desk like spokes on a wheel are computing spaces. Adjacent to this are spaces for low-level shelving and still further out are reading
tables and lounge furniture. The entire arrangement permits the user a nearly unobstructed view across the entire library and contributes to a sense of spaciousness and openness.

The contract between the older Memorial Library and the newer Raynor Library reflects a basic change in how libraries are designed. The Memorial Library was built on the premises of limited access to information and the need to centralize as large a collection of books and journals as possible. As collections grew, reader spaces became more cramped if not eliminated altogether.

By contrast, Raynor Library was built on a model that assumes abundance of information – not all of which is locally owned and physically housed in the library. Raynor was designed from a user’s perspective as well as their learning and study styles. In the past, students and faculty seldom went to the library to relax or collaborate with others. Memorial Library was not designed for it because expectations about conduct discouraged it, prohibitions against food and beverages did not permit it, and habits of solitary study conflicted with it. Raynor Library, both in design and function, seeks to respond to a new and different kind of user. It has not abandoned books, quiet study, and solitary reading; rather it represents the worlds of Gutenberg and Gates, books and bytes, fixed and flexible, past and present.
Raynor’s Conference Center, located on the lower level, had over 600 reservations in its first year, serving 16,000 persons from organizations and events such as the International Conference of Romanticism, Wisconsin Foundation of Independent Colleges, and the annual Women’s Study Conference. The conference center has a large foyer that is ideal for receptions and large meeting room that can be divided into three smaller rooms.

It is adjacent to Class Reserves & Media Services and has a number of group study rooms. Flexibility has been designed into this area as connections to the Conference Center and the Media Center are lockable allowing the entire area to be open or smaller areas to be sectioned off as demand dictates.

As at many University libraries, emphasis has shifted from single-event library orientations to promoting information literacy integral to the curriculum. The Center for Teaching and Learning leverages the library’s efforts and extends its collaboration resources as it helps faculty and students integrate new technologies into courses and projects.

It also serves as a second-tier referral for the Information Commons.

Housing these services within the Library places resources, expertise and technology in close proximity.
Marquette also has a large Special Collections area to house the Tommy G. Thompson Collection, the national Historical Publications and Records Commission survey and a descriptive guide to Native Catholic records in 500 repositories in 14 Western states.

These collections are not unlike Loyola’s “Florida” or “Cold War” collection, its government documents collection, the B.G. Gross Papers, Women and Leadership archives.

In addition to being impressed by a handsome physical library, a visitor cannot help but take note of the assertive efforts of Marquette to locate grants and funding for service activities. Contributions from more than 1,500 donors enabled construction of the John P. Raynor, S.J. Library – the largest capital project ever undertaken by Marquette University. Additionally, three annual gifts from the Marquette Parents Association funded networking of databases, a hands-on classroom, and an endowment for a Browsing Collection. Other gifts and grants include those from the national Historical Publications and Records Commission, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundations, the Raskob Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, and others.
PUBLIC LIBRARY VISITS

Academic and public libraries were once believed to be discrete entities that had separate missions and served significantly different, although somewhat overlapping, user communities. Today, as part-time student populations grow and more students opt to live in their home communities and commute to nearby academic institutions, governing bodies of library systems are exploring how joint-use libraries can leverage shared and complementary values, clientele, and space to create synergistic places for lifelong learning and civic engagement.

Thus, it seemed advisable to visit two nearby and recently constructed public library facilities, Oak Park Public Library and Naperville Public Library, to examine the degree to which services, collections, and operations of academic and public libraries are alike or not alike and to further inform Task Force discussions about how the distinct operational style of each type of library impacts its physical space and how each library type customarily meets both the unique and shared needs of its user community. Further, the Task Force wanted to examine: What purposes do public and academic library spaces serve? What are the distinguishing characteristics of each, and how do they give users a sense of shared purpose and meaning?

**Oak Park Public Library**

The Oak Park Public Library reflects the values and needs of the community it serves. Completed in the fall of 2003, its floors include places for information seeking, recreation, and information literacy. Patrons use the library in ways that imbue the space with cultural meaning, shared purpose, and pragmatic functionality. Users take the library space created for them and use it to meet their own individual and collective needs, sometimes in unexpected ways.

To enhance the aura of sociability and comfort, food and covered drinks, which are allowed on all floors, can be purchased at the Buzz Coffee Shop located at the main entrance to the library. The area created for the Buzz also functions as a transition space between the outside heated concrete walkway and the terrazzo flooring of the main entrance. The carpeting in this area reduces the amount of water and dirt tracked into the library and reduces slipping caused by wet shoes on terrazzo flooring.
The main circulation area is spacious and located on the far wall facing the main entrance. This positioning draws one into the library past the elevators and the library’s grand staircase both located to the right of the circulation desk. The circulation desk is impressive but not overly massive. A problem resolutions desk to the left of the circulation desk permits librarians to handle user problems/extended questions without disrupting other users at the circulation desk.

The grand staircase is also impressive and the designers have encased the stairway in glass to insulate the noise often associated with grand staircase structures. None of the floors in the Oak Park Public Library is designated as quiet; they constitute the active library space, encouraging interaction among user groups as well as between users and library staff.

Planners of Oak Park Library identified five types of user activity for which space would need to be designed in the new library:
- information seeking
- recreation
- teaching and learning
- connection
- contemplation

Some library patrons make use of all five types of space; others use only one or two. Regardless of whether an academic or public library, the environmental and social needs of each activity demand the development of separate spaces with specific characteristics. Library users of all types seek a wide range of scholarly and practical information. Some patrons prefer to search without help; for them, electronic resources must be arranged for easy use and the print collection must be well cataloged, logically located, and open for browsing.
The loss of contemplative space is a much-mourned feature of place in both public and academic libraries! This need for silent place is most at odds with other library uses and as such is most in need of protection. Fortunately, the Oak Park Library and both the academic libraries visited by the Task Force members still provide reading rooms and other spaces for reading, research, and study.

For example, the Oak Park Public Library Grand Reading Room on the third floor, designated a quiet area, is a destination for contemplative thought and study. It is outfitted with rich, modern furnishings and offers an excellent view of the nearby park area.

Group study rooms in both academic and public libraries attract users who want to study, learn, and work collaboratively. Instructional labs provide formal information literacy sessions taught by librarians for groups of students and the public.

Recreation seekers, whether looking for entertainment material to take home or for the opportunity to participate in library activities (e.g., attending story time, using the Internet, and attending author lectures) represent both public and academic library customer groups. To meet their needs, library space is needed for programming, workstations, and collections of appropriate materials. Some recreation customers are frequent “in-and-out” users; they appreciate the convenient free parking and hours that fit their work lives. Still others, want to stay a while and chat with librarians about books and other resources.

Public libraries are truly community places, a fact that is reflected in the design of the Oak Park Public Library in many ways. If one looks closely at the floor covering in the photo at the left and many others, he will see that most of the floor covering is of recycled rubber which, although more expensive, reflects the community’s concern for an environmentally friendly “green” library. The bird stencils on the window in this photo also reflect concern for the environment as they are not there simply for decoration but to keep birds from crashing into the window.
Teaching and learning spaces are at the heart of many academic libraries. Group study areas are collaborative environments that buzz with students working together; library classrooms afford a place for learning and experiential development of critical thinking; and public-service desks provide the opportunity for one-to-one teaching and learning. Public libraries share this commitment to teaching and learning by offering space for tutoring, literacy activities, training in Internet usage and resources, and homework help. Much of the Oak Park Public Library’s teaching and learning space has an abundance of lighting. Yet, this space has one set of shades to provide screening from the sun and another set of shades that darken the rooms completely.

Providing neutral place where groups can connect is also an important function of the public library, and one that benefits university students as well as members of the public at large. Civic programs, major displays, and public meetings provide forums for the open exchange of ideas students have read about or discussed in class. The library is a place where patrons meet in a highly accessible environment, where information and services are free of charge, and where all feel welcome. Oak Park has taken this concept a step further than most and built in an art gallery that also provides space for receptions and a gathering area outside and adjacent to its Veterans Meeting Room.

Academic libraries provide learning spaces that range from the elegant to the downright dowdy, depending on many factors. Regardless of size and budget, academic libraries offer places for students to study and work together; to engage quietly with library materials in print, electronic, and other formats; and to interact with library professionals who offer assistance, teaching, and validation of the scholarly research process. Loyola students are frequently first-generation college enrollees and may have few other places to gather for such academic pursuits. What do these students value? Students most highly value support for college coursework, support for research, and interaction with library staff for assistance and instruction (Childers 2002). Students also put great value on social environments that support collaborative learning. They seem to share a sense of purpose enhanced by congregating in the library: to study, to learn, to do well in courses, and to graduate.
Public library customers also have collective purposes, but theirs are more diverse than those of university students. Users have in common the desire to obtain purposeful information or pursue useful activity. Children look for homework help, adolescents gather in casual lounge areas, parents want picture and parenting books, seniors attend computer workshops, immigrants seek newspapers and other resources from the countries of their birth. The library is a cultural gathering place for groups that can be defined by ethnicity, age, interest, and more.

The most obvious differences between academic library and public library users are the wider age range of users at public libraries and consequent collections and services for children, young adults, and seniors, as well as the feeling of activity, motion, and interaction that pervades all floors of the Oak Park Public Library and are vital elements that must be accommodated in public libraries. The library’s mission to promote lifelong learning from youth to old age empowers citizens and students to achieve a better quality of life, find enjoyment, and bridge the digital divide.

The public library’s mandate to provide a learning environment to all users has led to the creation of a physical space that encourages both quiet reading and collaboration among all users. Students use the library as an education center from earliest childhood and throughout their lives, easing the transition to college. This blend of people and purpose creates a substantive milieu of intellectual cross-fertilization, service learning, and cultural enrichment. The availability of space for both individual and group work allows library users to acquire knowledge on their own or in new learning-community combinations.

Public libraries have a history of actively developing community partnerships, educating immigrants for citizenship, and providing access to information, most recently, digital information. The purposeful use of public space by people from all walks of life and of all ages, as well as free connectivity with civic thought and action through programs and displays, promotes community identity for all library users.
Naperville Public Library

Hennen's American Public Library Ratings measure a variety of statistics, including how much a library spends per capita, how many patrons use the library and even how many books are checked out. This year, the Naperville Public Libraries finished ahead of 311 other libraries from around the country that serve similar-sized cities and townships, according to annual statistical ratings. The new 95th Street library has been cited in the library literature as an example of modern library architecture. The 95th Street Naperville Public Library was opened in 2004 and has approximately 70,000 square feet. It has a staff of about 80 FTEs and is heavily used by the community.

Physically, the Naperville Public Library is attractive and ultra-modern in its design. It incorporates the latest technology and many of the design layout concepts one would expect to find in a public library. By definition, a public library serves the community and it should be expected that the library’s services would encompass a wide range of age groups. As is appropriate, a large meeting room and several smaller meeting rooms for community functions are located on the main level near the library circulation desk and to the right of the main entrance.

The largest meeting room has a solid wall that is retractable into the ceiling and appears to be a sensible upgrade that provides both flexibility and maximum sound abatement between rooms. This room and others appear to have wireless technology although it is surprising that they have only a few electrical wall outlets. It would have seemed wise to install more electrical outlets for a few additional dollars at the time of construction in order to provide for more flexible use of the rooms. Thus, the rooms serve well as meeting rooms but will require additional upgrades if future use should differ.
The site team was somewhat surprised at the choice of floor coverings, which seem less than desirable. The main entrance foyer boasts blue-grey indoor-outdoor carpeting that is already showing signs of wear. The area immediately in front of the circulation desk and in front of the elevator on the second floor has a poured polyurethane covering that appears attractive and easy to maintain although the library manager noted that it shows footprints too easily. Additionally, the proportionality of this covering to adjacent floor coverings seems overly dramatic.

Most of the library, except the information services area of the second floor, is covered by special-order brown tweed carpet squares. This carpet or something similar may have been a better choice to use throughout the library as the carpet in the information services area is too light and its pattern is too busy. Visually, this pattern is distracting and shows soiling much too readily. The library manager noted that they are already considering replacing it.

The blend of furnishings exhibits a juxtaposition of light and dark colors, wood and metal, cloth and leather, squared and rounded corners. While the variety is often pleasing to the eye, it is not a practical blend and has resulted in much of the furniture already showing signs of wear. Wooden chairs that butt against wooden counters or metal desk frames have large nicks, light colored fabrics are showing stains, and square objects don’t fit well against rounded ones.

Public libraries tend to place shelving in long rows and furniture in larger groupings than one is accustomed to in academic libraries, but in this library, this ordering of items is overdone and appear chain-ganged together. For example, a row of computer tables would be more attractive if interspersed with casual seating or some plants. The designers obviously wanted to create a high-tech feel. However, the overabundance of these grouping patterns has also created a sterile and not overly inviting atmosphere and there is little sense of privacy for users setting at these long rows of computer workstations.
Lessons Learned

The two public libraries, Naperville Public and Oak Park Public, are excellent examples of how libraries that serve similar publics can differ greatly in style and function; yet, both they and the academic libraries visited provide several lessons to be learned:

- Users develop their own quiet study areas through a culture of silence, particularly in library space where the building is least noisy.
- On the other hand, study groups spring up in unlikely places; they do not confine their activities to group study rooms.
- Providing separate spaces for different levels of public-workstation capabilities gives students doing research for coursework their own area, away from the family who is sending e-mail messages or the teen that is playing games.
- For libraries to remain dynamic, the spaces that define them and the services they offer must continually stimulate users to create new ways of searching and synthesizing materials.
- Technology has enriched user space. The library is the only centralized location where new and emerging information technologies can be combined with traditional knowledge resources in a user-focused, service-rich environment that supports today’s social and educational patterns of learning, teaching, and research.
- Library facilities are most successful when they are conceived to be an integral part of the institution as a whole.
- Food service needs to be seen not as an end in itself but as a means for creating community among learners.
- The character of the study environment matters, and that environment must in direct and tangible ways foster effective learning.
- People come to libraries because they offer security, comfort, and quiet; are free and commercial-free; provide a place to be with other people in a learning/cultural environment; offer opportunities to learn, search, inquire, and recreate; and afford opportunities for choice and serendipity.