

2005

New program growth and its impact on collection assessment at the UNLV libraries

Reeta Sinha

J. Cory Tucker

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, cory.tucker@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lib_articles

 Part of the [Collection Development and Management Commons](#)

Citation Information

Sinha, R., Tucker, J. C. (2005). New program growth and its impact on collection assessment at the UNLV libraries. *Library Hi Tech*, 23(3), 362-371.

https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lib_articles/13

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Library Faculty/Staff Scholarship & Research at Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

New Program Growth and Its Impact on Collection Assessment at the UNLV Libraries

AUTHORS

Reeta Sinha
Head of Collection Development
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Reeta Sinha is the Head of the Collection Development Department at the University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Cory Tucker
Business & Hospitality Librarian
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Cory Tucker is the Business & Hospitality Librarian at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Keywords

Collection Assessment, Collection Development, New Academic Programs, Guidelines, Budgeting

ABSTRACT

Since its opening four years ago, the Lied Library has experienced many challenges, mostly driven by dramatic changes at UNLV. Specifically, new strategic initiatives and tremendous growth of the university's student population have resulted in an increased number of new academic programs and degrees. These new academic programs have had a significant effect on Lied Library, impacting several areas of the library including staffing, training and collection development. This article will focus primarily on how the library's has responded to the growth in new programs and initiatives at UNLV during the past four years. More specifically the authors will discuss the role of the Collection Development department in the university's approval process for new academic programs and the role of subject librarians in assessing how well the

Libraries' collections meet the demands of the new academic programs proposed by faculty.

[ARTICLE BEGINS]

Given its location in one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States, it is no surprise that during the past several years, the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) has experienced a large increase in the number of students enrolled and new academic programs proposed and approved. These new programs and initiatives build upon the achievements of the 1993-1997 UNLV Academic Master Plan which resulted in the implementation of twenty-eight new academic programs designed to meet the demands of a rapidly growing student body and to implement the UNLV's vision and goals as a premier metropolitan research university. The rapid pace with which increases in student enrollment and new programs has evolved has, predictably, had a significant impact on UNLV Libraries in many ways, from services offered to staffing.

The library has responded to UNLV's growth by hiring additional subject librarians and support staff to increase communication with academic departments to ensure new program proposals include funding for library resources such as document delivery and instructional services as well as new information resources. The increase in use of the library has had an impact on staff training in both service and collection development. Finally, the increase in new academic programs has caused the library to adopt new approaches to budget allocation and collection development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Analyzing the literature, there are few writings related to university library support for new programs. Lanier and Carpenter (1994) discuss dealing with new academic programs at the Library of the Health Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The article outlines several challenges the library faces with the addition of new academic programs and provides a case study of dealing with the challenges. These challenges include budget constraints, collection management and the curriculum, reference assistance and resource format. The library created a plan of resource sharing with existing hospital libraries, enhancement of existing library services and increasing efforts in cooperative collection development.

Other articles related to collection assessment have focused on evaluative methods and tools for entire collections or subject specific collections. Oberlander and Streeter (2003) reported on the use of a prototype software at Portland State University called LibStatCAT. LibStatCAT is a visual basic program that converts data into a unique visual format to facilitate the interpretation and analysis of library collections and services. The program was created to assist libraries in developing a comprehensive assessment and analysis of local and regional resources and services. The software allows a library to store, manage, display and compare a variety of library data sets from one or many libraries and create histogram graphs for a journal and a monograph analysis by combining categories from several libraries holdings, circulation and ILL use, and applying subject categories to create supply and demand charts. Current data sets utilized in LibStatCAT include journal analysis, monograph analysis and subject category analysis. Another article analyzed the Florida Community College Collection

Assessment study and its impact on the use of funds from special legislative appropriations, weeding of collections and collection spending on twenty-eight community colleges in the state of Florida. The study showed that the assessment project did influence the appropriation of additional funds and impacted librarian's collection decisions. The results also indicated that twenty-one of the twenty-eight colleges used the assessment in weeding and collection development. An additional study of interest involved a collection assessment project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Bergen and Nimic (1999) discussed a collection assessment project at the Health Sciences Library. The project was initiated to develop a framework for future collection assessment projects by completing a multifaceted evaluation of the libraries' monograph and periodicals collections in the subject area of drug resistance. Techniques used included several traditional collection assessment tools, such as shelflist measurement; bibliography and standard list checking; and citation analysis. The evaluators explored strategies to overcome some of the problems inherent in the application of traditional collection assessment methods to the evaluation of biomedical collections. Standard monographs and core periodicals for the subject area were identified along with a measurement of the collections' strength relative to the collections of benchmark libraries. The project's primary outcome was a collection assessment methodology that has potential application to both internal and cooperative collection development in medical, pharmaceutical, and other health sciences libraries

While most libraries are engaged in some form of collection assessment, it is unclear how many have established and/or documented processes specifically related to discipline- or degree-specific collection assessment in response to requests from faculty

or as part of the approval process for new academic programs. A search of library collection development websites resulted in only a few instances in which librarians or faculty are given clear guidelines on how to perform degree-specific collection assessments for the purpose of establishing new academic programs.

NEW PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES AT UNLV

Established in 1957 as the southern regional division of the University of Nevada, UNLV has come a long way since the one-building campus it was at its inception. From an enrollment of about 300 students, the student population grew to over 21,000 in the first forty years and shows few signs of slowing down. For example, student headcount enrollment between 2000 and 2003 continued to increase at a rate of approximately 5% each year.

While each year in UNLV's history brought with it new buildings, faculty and academic programs, an increasingly aggressive academic agenda has been pursued and realized since the mid-1990s. In 2001, UNLV achieved a major objective when it was ranked in the Doctoral/Research Universities-Intensive category of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Between the 2000 fall semester and fall 2003, the number of degree and certificate programs at UNLV increased from 180 to 202, with more than half of the new programs added at the graduate level. Reflecting this emphasis on graduate studies, in 2003, UNLV saw a 61 percent increase over the previous year in completed applications received by the Graduate College.

UNLV's Academic Master Plan for 1998-2003 outlined this growth, much of which had been realized by the start of the 2004 fall academic year. As stated above, the majority of new programs and initiatives proposed and implemented have been at the

graduate level, cutting across all disciplines, from a doctoral degrees in the fine arts to the opening of the Shadow Lane Campus established to house a new School of Dental Medicine, the Cancer Institute and the Biotechnology Center. A new Health Sciences Division was created in 2004, including a new School of Public Health in addition to graduate programs in nursing and allied health.

The Libraries have been right at the center of this phenomenal growth at UNLV. Whether it be in the form of ever-increasing numbers of students and faculty using its state-of-the-art facilities, the addition of library staff to provide reference and instruction services to the campus community or building a collection, print and electronic that meets the demands of a wide array of new academic initiatives, each area of the Libraries have been impacted. In Collection Development, examples include the fourteen new program proposals received from academic departments since the department began keeping online records in 2003 and the ten library assessment reports completed by subject librarians in one calendar year alone, for review by campus committees. Finally, while the process to add new courses is not as lengthy or elaborate as establishing new university programs, the fact that Collection Development and subject librarians have processed approximately 300 new course requests since 2002, requests that include books and journals necessary for the library to obtain, is yet another illustration of the rapid growth taking place at UNLV and its impact on collection development activities.

LIBRARY COLLECTION ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Collection assessment reports are intended to describe the strengths and weaknesses of library collections, overall or in specific subject areas. A qualitative assessment, in general, may be used to explain why the collection is as it is and detail

ways in which to strengthen areas in which there are weaknesses. A well-written assessment should also include specific budgetary details and steps to take to improve collections in which there are real or perceived weaknesses.

Some libraries have included the subject librarian or library liaison's role in collection assessment in staff procedures and policies manual, especially where the process is a formal one. At UNLV, the library assessment report is an integral part of the new program proposal documentation that moves throughout the university system over a period of twelve months. Each December the Provost receives an "Intent to Propose a New Degree Program" form by the department and college. By May, the full program proposal is due to the Provost and a copy is sent to the Libraries representative on the new Program Evaluation Committee. This committee reviews and makes recommendations regarding all new programs at the graduate level. The Provost's office conducts the Academic Budget review by September, by which time the Library Resources Review is also due to the Provost. In October the Priority and New Program Review committee reviews submitted proposals and submits a report of its recommendation to the Provost for review by the Graduate College. The last step is to receive approval from the Academic Affairs Council and the Board of Regents in December of the following year.

In 2003, recognizing a need to present collection assessment information in a succinct manner to members of the UNLV New Program Evaluation Committee and seeing the large number of new program proposals that were being submitted, Collection Development and a small group of subject librarians worked to develop a template for the

Library Resources Review. Additionally, a process by which to track and record library assessments and other new program documentation was implemented by Collection Development given the length of time each proposal would remain active, from inception to approval or disapproval.

Observations by the Libraries representative to the New Program Evaluation Committee guided the subject librarians as they prepared the template. First and foremost was brevity; administrators were not going to read length library assessment reports. Next, the new program's impact on the library's collection budget and other services had to be clearly presented, so that there was no ambiguity about the 'bottom line' in terms of the resources needed by the Libraries to support the new program.

SUBJECT LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARY ASSESSMENT REPORTS

At UNLV Libraries, each librarian is assigned a discipline(s) where the librarian is responsible selection of materials including books, journals, electronic databases, media and other information resources. One of the specific duties of subject librarians is to create a collection assessment report for every new program at the university. This assessment report involves evaluating the current library collection and how the new program, if approved, would impact the library. This evaluation involves listing resources currently held and recommends the purchase of new materials, if needed.

The chain of approval for new programs starts in the specific department and moves to the college and through several university committees then to UNLV Libraries and then on to final approval. The subject librarian receives an electronic copy of the New Program Proposal Summary and must draft a collection assessment document. Due to the fact that UNLV has had an increase in new programs, subject librarians have been

overwhelmed by the number of collection assessments in recent years. Performing these program assessments can be very time consuming, resulting in a need to establish a set of criteria and guidelines to assist subject librarians with their evaluation.

NEW PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

In order to deal with this growing problem, a task force of three subject librarians was organized to establish a set of new program assessment guidelines and create a template to ensure a consistent way of recording assessments and save time for subject librarians. The task force consisted of three subject librarians who had the most experience in creating these documents. The task force met over a period of two months.

The decision to establish a set of guidelines was based on the idea of uniformity and consistency. In the past, assessments were created by individual subject librarians, who used their own method of evaluation and writing format. Subject librarians also differed in the analysis of library resources. In a typical program assessment, subject librarians evaluated the current library collection and how the collection would be affected by the new program. The evaluation would focus on books, journals, media resources and electronic databases. In most cases, the recommendation would consist of a general statement indicating that additional funding would be necessary to expand current resources.

The decision to create a template for subject librarians to use for assessment reports was necessary to alleviate the problems created by the lack of consistency among the new program assessment reports submitted by subject librarians and time management concerns. New program assessments can be very time consuming. Next, there was a concern with the methodology used in each analysis. Are subject librarians

using a detailed enough analysis to make a reliable assessment? Finally, with budget constraints being a concern in libraries, other factors and expenditures, besides the collection itself, were added to each assessment. These additional factors and expenditures are also important to take into account because there are other library services that are directly affected by new programs and additional students.

NEW PROGRAM ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

The guidelines section was created to get the subject librarian thinking about all possible factors that may impact the library's collection. The guidelines are:

1. Careful examination of the *New Program Proposal Summary*. Because the summary is so detailed there is a lot of good information in the document. The most significant is the course listing section. This shows if the courses are either new or currently offered. If the course is new, the description should provide enough information to perform a resource evaluation.
2. Some summaries include a list of needed resources. If the information in this section is insufficient, call the professor(s) whose names are included in the proposal.
3. Search the Internet for resources and listing of similar programs at other Universities. Contact other libraries and gather information. Evaluate what other libraries are currently spending on resources and how much the library spent on retrospective purchases, if any. Contact professors who are listed in the assessment. They may have a list of core resources and other universities currently offering the same program.

4. Outside agencies may have good information. Look at accreditation organizations or academic/professional associations in the discipline. What are the standards?

The guidelines also included an in-depth analysis of specific types of resources. The most significant change from previous assessments is the inclusion of inflation rates for all materials.:

Library Materials

- **Books:** search the library's catalog for books by subject areas listed in the proposal.
 - Will books be needed?
 - How much money will be needed to update or maintain current collection? Find average cost of books in subject from prior years to calculate additional purchases. *WorldCat* is a useful resource. Reports from Yankee Book Peddler may also be used.
 - Add in inflation for pricing to maintain current collection (5%).
 - In addition to the circulating collection are there Reference books needed?
- **Journals:** evaluate the number of journals currently subscribed to by the library.
 - Is the current collection sufficient?
 - Try to find list of most important journals in a subject area (Web of Science or contact department). Also keep in mind what databases we subscribe to and their journal holdings.

- If we need to purchase specific journals, list title and cost.
 - Add in inflation for pricing to maintain current journal collection (10%).
 - Look into journal packages that might be needed for subject.
- **Electronic Resources/Databases**
 - what databases does Lied subscribe to that are a “must” keep?
 - Are there any databases that we don’t subscribe to that might be useful?
 - Add in inflation for pricing to maintain subscriptions to databases (10%).
- **Government Publications**
 - Is there a governmental agency(s) that publishes materials in this discipline? Does the library currently receive these materials?
- **Non-Book Materials**
 - Are there any other resources like electronic book collections, etc.
- **Journal Backfiles**
 - Is there a need for a retrospective journal collection?

In addition to the collection analysis, the new program assessment guidelines created new items for evaluation. These items are other areas in the library that may be affected by new programs. These include public services (reference, instruction and circulation), and document delivery. In regards to public services, each subject librarians must participate in the service rotation at the reference desk. The subject librarian can use past experience at the reference desk to add any comments of anticipated increased traffic flow at the desk. Unfortunately, an exact cost impact cannot be calculated for

public services. Document delivery is another area that will be affected by new programs. Document Delivery expenditures can be calculated two ways. First, if the library is able to purchase new journals, the cost of Document Delivery will be X amount. This cost analysis can be calculated using previous statistics for each discipline (requests made and cost). If the library does not receive funding for additional journals, the cost of Document Delivery will be Y amount. Obviously, the amount for Document Delivery will be much higher if new journals are not purchased. In this section, both scenarios are discussed.

TAKE IN FIGURE 1

CAPTION: New Program Assessment Template for Subject Librarians

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

These recommendations were approved by the Head of Collection Development and subject librarians began using the guidelines and template at the beginning of the Spring semester 2004. These guidelines will be used for all future program assessments.

REFERENCES

Bergen, P.L. and Nemecek, D. (1999), "An assessment of collections at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Health Sciences Libraries: drug resistance," *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, Vol. 87 No. 1, pp. 37-42.

Lanier, Don and Carpenter, Kathy (1994), "Enhanced Services and Resource Sharing in Support of New Academic Programs," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, March, pp. 15-18.

Oberlander, Cyril and Streeter, Dan (2003), "LibStatCAT: a library statistical collection assessment tool for individual libraries and cooperative collection development," *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 493-506.

Perrault, Anna H., Adams, Tina M., Smith, Rhonda and Dixon, Jeannie (2002), "The Florida Community College Statewide Collection Assessment Project: Outcomes and Impact," *College & Research Libraries*, Vol. 63 No. 3, pp. 240-249.

UNLV, Academic Master Plan, 1998-2003 Presented to the University and Community College System Board of Regents.

*Add in Institutional Planning and Analysis cite
Websites from UC, USC and ?*

FIGURE 1

[Template]

Program Name

Subject Librarian

Date

1. *Introductory Statement*

For examples, see completed library assessment reports for new programs at L:\CDMD\New Program & Course Data\Library Assessments.

2. *Library Resources*

Books

Are books important in this subject area? If so, estimate the amount of money that will be required to update or maintain the collection.

Estimates can be obtained by determining the number of books published in the last few years in the subject, using Amazon.Com or World Cat. Bowker's Annual can also provide an average cost per title in broad categories.

Journals

Evaluate the number of journals currently subscribed to by the Libraries in this program area. Are they sufficient? If more journals are needed, list titles and costs (including inflation). If the list is extensive, include as appendix.

Potential sources for lists are Journal Citation Reports, accrediting agencies, and professional associations (including library organizations).

Electronic Resources/Databases

List the online databases in the subject area that the Libraries gets, and should keep. List any useful ones that might be useful, with cost. Factor in inflation factor of 10%.

Government Publications

Consider this category when determining available library resources. It may or may not be relevant, depending upon subject area.

Non-Book Materials

Consider this category when determining available library resources. You may find more than you thought the Libraries owned.

Journal Backfiles

Decide whether or not it is necessary to buy journal backfiles and, if so, estimate the costs. University Microfilms is a good source of price information.

3. *Public Services resources for proposed program.*

Decide whether or not there will be an increased impact on public services. Will there be an impact on Instruction? What will be the impact at the Research & Information desks? Will there be a need for more detailed research assistance?

4. Document Delivery resources for proposed program.

Usage of Document Delivery Services varies greatly, dependent upon the discipline. Medicine, for example, accounted for 43% of requests in 2001/02 (DDS and Infotrieve), while Education accounted for only 2%. Keep in mind that this is a real cost that should be considered. The following are rough averages for annual fees paid for requests supporting a graduate program within the listed discipline, and do not include personnel or library operations costs.

<i>Medicine</i>	<i>\$ 3,585</i>	<i>Science and Engineering</i>	<i>\$ 800</i>
<i>Social Sciences</i>	<i>\$ 500</i>	<i>Humanities</i>	<i>\$ 180</i>
<i>Business (not Hotel)</i>	<i>\$ 100</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>\$ 50</i>

5. Summary

Summarize the collection strengths and weaknesses and provide an estimate for ongoing costs, including inflation.

Library Funding Summary

Resource	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Inflation
Books	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	5%
Journals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	10%
Databases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	10%
Government Publications	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Non-Book Materials	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Backfiles	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Document Delivery	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	