

**Middle States Summary Report from the Libraries**  
**Tara Lynn Fulton, Dean**  
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The following documents are available on our website for review:

- 2007 five year program review (including external evaluation)
- Annual statistical report
- Annual planning/goals document
- Annual budget breakdowns
- Assessment to budget linkage – 2005-2007

Focal questions for a Middle States review are whether the library is “adequately supported and staffed to accomplish the institution’s objectives for student learning” and whether library collections and services are “adequate to support the institution’s educational programs.” This document attempts to summarize an answer to that combination of questions.

I begin my report with several strengths.

First, we are fortunate at LHU that information literacy is integrated as a general education component, and the librarians are frequently involved in supporting those classes. Library instruction has grown by 25% in the past five years. The librarians took the lead in design of an assessment rubric, and have published results from one core course in which the results were used to modify the assignment. Librarians are working with other general education faculty to expand use of the rubric.

Second, LibQual and our other surveys generally indicate that students are satisfied with the service they receive at the library and with the resources available to them. A willing and helpful staff who provide one-on-one service is a strength of the LHU Libraries; 2/3 of the comments in the LibQual results were positive regarding staff and service. Our reports show tangible ways in which we have used survey results to improve specific aspects of collections and services, especially in areas such as Clearfield, Media Services, and the Children’s/Curriculum Library.

Third, the libraries are generally perceived to be central to the academic mission of the campus. We also have a very well-established liaison system of subject librarians, which ensures continual feedback between what academic departments needs and the librarians support for programs. We are seen as leaders in the use of technology. We have, for example, been a center of support for the new laptop program and enhancing students’ ability to take advantage of new instructional technologies. Special technology funding has been essential to our ability to stay up-to-date with these evolving needs. We have had some success getting positions upgraded to stay up with new technologies, and I have reserved funds to devote to professional development for the faculty and staff.

Fourth, the library has a well-established planning process that allows us to focus our collective energies on important goals, and to tailor financial and personnel resources to address those specific goals. Our team-based structure has been a critical element in making maximum use of the staff we have.

Those four strengths are counterbalanced with some less positive indicators.

First, the State System libraries long ago began to collaborate to provide both an online system and core databases as a consortium. The Keystone Library Network thus reduces the need for in-house systems staff, and provides Lock Haven with less expensive access to databases than a school of our size could otherwise afford. The previous Chancellor was so concerned about the overall state of support for the libraries in the system that she allocated special performance funds for the past four years to support the libraries. This support has been central to our ability to offer more databases and to build collections in some new, emerging areas. Otherwise, the library relies on student equipment fees to buy books (about \$50,000 per year) – because of a small operating budget, we are unable to consider books to be an operating expense of the university. Library support needs are not required to be included in new course or new degree proposals, and it is rare for stated needs to be followed up with actual funds. We rely heavily on interlibrary loan for monograph and article provision, especially in science disciplines.

Second, in 2007/2008 the library received less than 3.25% of the E&G budget. Five years ago it received 3.86% of the E&G budget, which is closer to the rule-of-thumb standard of 4% for an effective academic library. This fall the library suffered an initial 9% operating reduction, and the latest state government budget call-backs are likely to result in an additional 7.25% reduction. This fall we canceled half of the remaining print journals in the library. Since library materials have the highest inflation rate of any higher education expenditures (higher than energy costs or health care benefit costs), the total loss in real buying power for library materials from last year to this year is closer to 25%. Because we are also losing a total of 19.5% of student employment funds compared to last year, we may be forced to cut library hours, especially at Clearfield. We currently have a position frozen, and are sure that we will lose either that position or the next one that comes vacant; one full-time position is over 5% of total staffing. We are already short on support staff by about four positions according to comparison benchmark reports. So, budget and personnel resources in many areas are insufficient and declining.

Third, Stevenson Library is now 40 years old, and we are told that there is no hope for renovation for at least another 15 years. A new roof was installed when we have leakage problems, but deferred maintenance problems and central HVAC insufficiency remains. While the public area of the first floor was refurnished in 2001, no infrastructure work has been done. In the LibQual survey, students expressed dissatisfaction with the look of the Stevenson Library, with the noise level, and with the amount of technology available. Many tables in the library no longer have accompanying chairs – in fact we now have seating for less than 500 students, about half of what should be available by academic library standards, which indicate that you should have one seat for every five students on

campus. By state system guidelines, library space should be approximately 40,000 sq ft larger than the current 75,000 sq ft facility – in other words, the library should be half again as large as it is. I wrote a report in 2003 with a vision for renovation, which talked about the trend in academic libraries to reconceptualizing the library as place, and many people have pointed out how ideal it would be to have more special synergy between the library and other aspects of academic support, but limited state funds for renovation have kept any of those ideas from reaching even the planning phase.

In sum, our mission priority is on meeting the curricular needs of undergraduates. In terms of collections and services, we are generally able to do so. In terms of the library's role as a central academic place on campus, the age of the building is increasing challenging the library's ability to remain relevant. The labor- and collection-intensive needs of graduate programs, especially those delivered entirely online, make it nearly impossible for the library to provide more than very basic support to those programs. We are working with teaching faculty to do more assessment of student outcomes; within the library we have used benchmarking and satisfaction surveys extensively to evaluate our services and make adjustments. We are concerned in the current economic climate about the demands for the campus to continue to grow without additional investment in core resources such as the library.