Explanation of the library’s innovation

Since 2007, the University of Illinois Library has engaged in an intensive and intentional program to transform library services. The New Service Models (NSM) program is designed to sustain the Illinois tradition of excellence in Library services while navigating transformations in academic libraries and scholarly communication, in a period of escalating economic challenges in Illinois and globally. By focusing on improving services, the reorganizations that occurred under the NSM program engaged library faculty, library staff, and library users in both open discussions of the library’s future and team-based planning and implementation.

While there are five primary physical facilities, the University Library actually consists of a number of units located across campus. The tradition of decentralized subject libraries dates back to the turn of the 20th century, and was reinforced by the “holistic librarianship” philosophy of Hugh Atkinson, director of libraries from 1976 to 1986, when Illinois made great strides in networking its catalog. At the opening of the 21st century, these units included forty-five separate service operations, with over half of them located within the Main Library. The New Service Models program has significantly reduced the complexity of the library organization. At the start of 2013, the University Library consists of 26 public service locations, five technical services operations, and several administrative, programmatic, or support units.

The monolithic model of departmental subject libraries has been replaced with a variety of service models suited to the needs of different teaching and learning communities. Sixteen departmental libraries have been closed, merged, and/or transitioned to virtual libraries, while several critical behind-the-scenes operations were restructured. A new central service, the Scholarly Commons, provides faculty, researchers and students with access to experts in digital content creation and analysis; scholarly communication; geospatial, textual, and numeric data analysis; and innovative teaching and learning methods. As of December 2012, more than twenty reorganizational projects have been completed or are in final stages of implementation. Work is ongoing, though at a calmer pace, because much of the original vision has been actualized.

An important outcome of the NSM program is the evolution of a new, team-based process to manage organizational change, a process characterized by unprecedented high levels of participation and transparency, resulting in a subtle but very real shift in the organizational culture, away from Balkanized services for narrow constituencies, and toward a realized vision of “the Library with a capital L.” Another very important outcome of the NSM process was a new ability to respond flexibly and
creatively to recession-driven budget pressures and to the loss of many library faculty and staff who took advantage of retirement incentives.

**Published mission statement of nominated institution**

The University Library supports teaching, learning, scholarship, and public engagement at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign by providing world-class library services and collections, and acts as an informed steward of collections and content comprising a current and retrospective record of human knowledge.

**History of development and implementation of the program in brief**

The “New Service Models” (NSM) program was launched during the fall of 2007 to address strategic challenges to the future of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s University Library. These challenges, global in nature and articulated in reports produced by the Library’s initial NSM planning team, include changes to the ways in which scholarly work is conducted, changes to the ways in which the results of that work is communicated and preserved for the future, changes in the way in which faculty and students use libraries and other information resources, and changes in the boundaries of disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary inquiry. Confronted by rapidly escalating economic challenges to our traditional model of departmental library service, as well as by sea changes in the way that scholarly information is created, disseminated, used, and stewarded for the future, the Library undertook a broad and inclusive approach to identifying opportunities for strategic investment in resources, collections, facilities, and information technology, as well as opportunities to engage its users in far-ranging discussions of the future of Library services.

The decision process for prioritizing new service model proposals was based on the following principles:

- New service models will enhance user services and provide opportunities for financial benefit, including reallocation of human or capital resources to other strategic priorities.
- New service models will facilitate regular communication and collaboration among faculty, students, librarians, library staff, and members of the public.
- Responsible stewardship of content in all forms must incorporate a life-cycle approach to all programs and services. This includes thoughtful selection and acquisition, provision of access, preservation, and active curation, particularly in the case of special collections.
- New service model outcomes must be both measurable and predictable (to the extent that they accomplish the intended program goals). All programs and services must demonstrate adherence to a schedule of milestones, outcomes, and completion dates, and progress must be measured using rigorous assessment programs.
- Recognizing the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of academic inquiry, new service models will focus primarily on the creation of “hubs” that provide coordination and access to human
expertise and content across disciplinary clusters, including both print and digital resources from the Library system. While physical space may play some role in these changes, digital information resources and new service delivery models will play a primary role in the development of these models.

The NSM program has been carried out using a project-based approach that allows for emergent design of NSM initiatives, as well as for inclusion of Library users from across campus in the planning process. The Library’s existing Faculty Executive Committee (an elected group), in conjunction with the Library Administration, prioritizes NSM projects and defines their initial scope. Teams designated to lead the planning and implementation of discrete NSM activities are composed of Library faculty and staff members, as well as faculty from campus programs with identified interests and concerns related to the specific project. NSM teams are charged with communicating and consulting with the broader groups represented by team members. Most NSM projects proceed in two stages: first, a planning team studies the service and its context, proposes solutions, and assesses their feasibility. The planning team’s recommendations are reviewed, and if necessary amended, by the Faculty Executive Committee. The Executive Committee then charges an implementation team to carry the work forward. This approach has allowed not only for direct user involvement in the planning of NSM program activities, but also in unprecedented opportunities for formal and informal engagement around core library service issues with faculty groups, library committees, campus academic leadership, and the campus community, at large.

Many significant changes have resulted thus far from the NSM program, including the transition of the Labor & Industrial Relations Library, the Library & Information Science Library, and the Business & Economics Library to “embedded librarian” service models supported by virtual libraries and the integration of the Afro-Americana Library Unit, the City Planning & Landscape Architecture Library, the Physics & Astronomy Library, the Geology Library, and the Biology Library into complementary service units. Departmental libraries within the Main Library building have been combined into larger units. For example, the English Library and the Modern Languages and Linguistics Library merged to form the Literatures and Languages Library; the Applied Health Sciences Library joined with the Education & Social Sciences Library to create the Social Sciences, Health, and Education Library (SSHEL); and several smaller units were merged in a new International and Area Studies Library. Where departmental libraries continue to exist in academic buildings—for example, Chemistry, Communications, and Veterinary Medicine—services and physical footprints have been altered in response to current needs of users. Other outcomes include the reorganization of core reference services (on-site and virtual) around three hubs, located in the Main Library and Undergraduate Library (social sciences, humanities, area studies, and government information), the Grainger Library (physical sciences and engineering), and the Funk Family Library (life sciences). One of the earliest NSM projects created a Scholarly Commons within the Main Library, where librarians partner with other experts to support digital content creation, data analysis, and new modes of scholarly communication. Although the focus has remained on services to the Library’s users, workflows have been streamlined in some behind-the-scenes areas as well, including digitization, cataloging, and collection maintenance. An important, early project studied the digital content lifecycle and implemented more effective ways for the University Library to manage,
preserve, and provide access to Library-created digital content. Finally, the NSM program has supported the design and development of innovative service programs outlined in the University Library’s Strategic Plan, including a Library-wide approach to health information services.

It became standard practice under the NSM program to review any service led by a librarian who was retiring. Further, the NSM program provided the impetus and resources for long-desired changes, such as the consolidation of services for international and area studies, as well as initiating examination of core services, such as reference, that were overdue for re-evaluation. All of the NSM projects were motivated by a desire to transform services, extend the Library’s reach to users, and design more cost-effective service delivery modes. For example, closing and merging small libraries resulted in longer hours of evening and weekend access to specialized subject collections. Librarians freed from day-to-day management of departmental libraries can now concentrate on assessing user needs, developing new services, reaching out to users (e.g. through an embedded presence in academic units), and enhancing online information.

From 2009 to 2012, a Library faculty member, JoAnn Jacoby, was reassigned to serve as the NSM Coordinator. Significant progress occurred during that period. In the summer of 2012, the intensive period of change concluded, and responsibility for ongoing NSM coordination was transferred to the Associate University Librarian for User Services. Because the NSM method (see flowchart) has been honed through experience and has repeatedly proven to be an effective framework for planning and implementing reorganizations, it is anticipated that two or three NSM-style projects will be undertaken every year going forward.

Intended clientele; including a brief description of the method(s) of assessing effects on clientele

The New Service Model program encompasses a number of small- and medium-scale changes to the Library’s organization and operations. The impacted clientele include both library users and library employees. Assessment methods have varied, depending on the particular needs of the individual new models. The methods have included: surveys and focus groups conducted before and during planning phases; tracking usage of online resources, including websites and research guides; tracking usage of online and face-to-face services, such as chat reference and embedded reference service in academic units; comments submitted through email and web forms; ongoing informal conversations with affected clientele; and post-implementation surveys.

Principal players (staff, consultants), with brief biographical statements

Paula T. Kaufman

Paula T. Kaufman is the Juanita J. and Robert E. Simpson Dean of Libraries and University Librarian. Prior to joining the University of Illinois in 1999, Dean Kaufman served for 11 years as Dean of Libraries at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; as Acting Vice President, Director of Academic Information Services, Director of Library Services, Acting Head of the East Asian Library, and Head of the Business and
Economics Library at Columbia University; and as a social science reference librarian at Yale University. Dean Kaufman also has considerable experience in the private sector. She has served the library profession in posts including President and Board member of the Association of Research Libraries, as Founding Board member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois, as Chair and Board member of the Council on Library and Information Resources, and as Chair and Board member of the Center for Research Libraries. On campus, she currently serves as chair of the IT Governance Executive Committee, chair of the Data Stewardship Committee and as a Governing Board member for the Illinois Informatics Initiative. Dean Kaufman has been recognized for her contributions by the Robert B. Downs Award, the American Library Association’s Office of Intellectual Freedom Anniversary Roll of Honor, Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award, Illinois Academic Librarian of the Year Award, and the Association of College and Research Libraries Academic/Research Librarian of the Year Award. Dean Kaufman has lectured on the NSM process both in the U.S. and abroad.

JoAnn Jacoby

JoAnn Jacoby, currently Head of Reference, Research and Scholarly Services, served as New Service Models Program Coordinator from 2008-2012. As NSM Coordinator, Jacoby was responsible for overall leadership of the program, which included overseeing the NSM budget, establishing the foundations for project management, and ensuring effective communication and coordination among discrete project teams, as well as with the broader Library community and relevant campus stakeholders. Jacoby also served as the administrative liaison for teams focused on Biology, Geology, Veterinary Medicine, Literatures and Languages, Government Documents, Communications and Library and Information Services and Digital Content Lifecycle Management.

Thomas H. Teper

Tom Teper has served as the Associate University Librarian for Collections and Technical Services since 2007. Prior to assuming that position, Teper served as the Library’s Head of Preservation. Over the last several years, Teper has contributed to numerous NSM teams and served as the administrative liaison for teams focused on the Central Stacks; International and Area Studies; and Social Sciences Health, and Education Library. Prof. Teper worked with teams on identifying collections needs associated with the NSM process and worked to identify resources to meet those requirements.

Beth Sandore Namachchivaya

Namachchivaya assumed the role of Associate University Librarian for Information Technology Planning & Policy in 2002, and has focused on technology and digital library services, digital preservation, and eResearch support and scholarly communication services. In the past few years Prof. Namachchivaya has led or facilitated NSM and other Library teams that have helped to introduce new services, re-focus existing programs, and institute process changes. These have included: digital content life cycle planning, working with technical services, IT, and collections curators; planning for effective health information services; planning for integrated library services in Social Sciences, Health, Education and Business.
Scott Walter

Scott Walter, currently University Librarian at DePaul University, served as Associate University Librarian for Services at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from 2006 – 2012. While at Illinois, Dr. Walter provided initial leadership for the New Service Models program in 2007-08, and served as the team leader or administrative liaison on a number of NSM teams, including Labor & Employment Relations, City Planning & Landscape Architecture, International and Area Studies, Reference Services, Scholarly Commons, Technical Services, and Business Information Services. Dr. Walter was the principal author of the 2009 New Service Models Report and Action Plan, and served in leadership roles for units in transition during the NSM process, including as Acting Head of Reference, Research, and Government Information Services, and Acting Head, International and Area Studies Library.

Susan E. Searing

Sue Searing became the Interim Associate University Librarian for User Services in April 2012 and assumed coordination of NSM projects in August 2012. Previously, she was the Library & Information Science Librarian. In addition to leading the transformation of LIS library services, she has served on four other NSM teams as a member, chair, or administrative liaison. Before joining the University of Illinois Libraries in 1997, she worked at Yale and the University of Wisconsin.

Other important players

We wish to acknowledge all of the librarians and staff throughout the University of Illinois Library who contributed to this change effort, as well as the faculty and students who shared their ideas and inspiration by participating in planning teams, focused group conversations, or otherwise sharing their feedback.

Functional specifications and requirements, if appropriate

NSM Decision Making Flow Chart
(http://www.library.illinois.edu/nsm/NSMDecisionMakingFlowchart.pdf)

URLs, photos, videos, other media, if appropriate to understanding the innovation

- NSM website (http://www.library.illinois.edu/nsm/), see especially:
- New Service Models Report to the Provost, 2009
  (http://www.library.illinois.edu/nsm/actionplan/NSM_Report_09.pdf)
- NSM News & More (http://www.library.illinois.edu/nsm/newsletter/)

Websites of selected units:
Press coverage, if appropriate

“For University library system puts focus on 'excellent service',” Daily Illini, May 4, 2009. 

User documentation, if appropriate

N/A

2. Nominator’s statement: Why is the nominee particularly worthy of this recognition?

The New Service Models (NSM) program of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Libraries is a bold and successful approach that has positioned one of the world’s major research libraries to continue sustaining and transforming services in the 21st century. Illinois’ size, stature, and complexity posed significant challenges to service provision and impeded organizational change. In the 2010-11 ARL Statistics, the Illinois library ranked 2nd in the number of volumes held and 8th in the overall ARL Membership Index. At the beginning of the NSM program, the Urbana-Champaign campus had nearly forty separate libraries. Because many research libraries are likewise characterized by large size, multifaceted mission, and complex organizational structure, Illinois’s success is reassuring proof that transformative organizational change is achievable even in large, tradition-bound libraries. Moreover, the New Service Models program provides a blueprint for a process that is open, flexible and inclusive of librarians, library staff, and library users. At Illinois, librarians fostered large-scale change through a steady series of smaller, focused transformations and, in so doing, solidified a process for planning and implementing change that will continue, even though the intensive period of the program has concluded, with most of the original priorities met. Through NSM the Library has cultivated a culture of change among its staff that supports ongoing assessment, and assumes dynamic user needs to which services ought to adapt.

As the accompanying letters of support from Illinois faculty attest, the NSM process has been characterized by deep involvement of teaching faculty in the shaping of new services. This commitment to faculty input enabled the NSM program to respond to the varied needs of users in the different disciplines, while moving away from the old service model that was based on separate subject libraries. The NSM process was exceptionally transparent; summaries of open “town hall” meetings, team
The NSM process has, unquestionably, better prepared the University of Illinois Library for the economic challenges of recent years. The state of Illinois was particularly hard hit by the recession, and funding for public higher education suffered. Further, retirement incentives offered by the state resulted in a “brain drain” of library faculty and staff; because of the NSM program, we could react to the retirements and overall reduction in personnel as opportunities to restructure services. However, economic pressures were not the main driver of the NSM program. In fact, the Library re-allocated funds in order to support the one-time expenses of remodeling, acquiring electronic content, and moving print collections. The unwavering priority placed on improving services is at the core of the program’s success. It bears stressing that the NSM program was not imposed by University administrators, but grew organically from the library’s own analysis of its deficiencies in the face of present and future needs of scholars and students.

Judging the NSM program on the SPIRL criteria, there is no question that the changes wrought by NSM have had a “measurable impact on the library’s own clientele” and have also demonstrated “the potential for influencing the practices and/or standards of research librarianship generally.” Importantly, the processes that have evolved within the University of Illinois Library for thoughtful consideration of proposed service improvements and for involvement of affected constituencies in real and meaningful ways are processes that are now integrated into our work. As an organization, we think differently, and more productively, about change as a result of the NSM program. The NSM program epitomizes sustainable change in research libraries.

3. Listing of publications or references, if any, by the nominee that support this nomination.


Searing, Susan E. (2010). The librarian’s library in transition from physical to virtual place. Paper presented at Libraries as Space and Place (satellite meeting of the IFLA World Library and Information Congress), Turin, Italy. (http://hdl.handle.net/2142/13765).


4. Letters of support and/or testimonials may be submitted by readers/users, other research libraries, and others.

Letters are attached from: Dr. John Caughlin, Professor of Communications; Matthew Conner, Instruction/Reference Librarian, University of California-Davis; Dr. Robert Graves, Dean Emeritus of the College of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Tom Leonard, Dean of Libraries, UC-Berkeley; Dr. Alex Scheeline, Professor of Chemistry Emeritus and former Chair of the Senate Committee on the Library; Dr. Linda Smith, Associate Dean, Graduate School of Library and Information Science; and Edward Van Gemert, University Librarian, University of Wisconsin-Madison – in hand
The Library Executive Committee (EC) posts charge on EC website at least one week prior to discussion with note to LIBNEWS-L requesting comment. EC reviews charge and may advise the University Librarian to approve and/or request revisions.

Teams post meeting notes and reports promptly to the NSM website. Team Leaders chair meetings, direct work of the Team and report on ideas under consideration at NSM stuff sessions and Library Faculty meetings. Administrative liaisons help navigate process, provide feedback regarding feasibility and are equal partners in decision making. All AULs & Team Leaders attend pre-launch meeting.

The Library Executive Committee (EC) posts plan on EC website at least one week prior to discussion with note to LIBNEWS-L requesting comment. EC may advise the University Librarian to approve all or some of the recommendations. Requests for revisions go back to Planning Team.

Drawing some members from the Planning Team, the UL charges a Team to implement recommendations. Scope & timeline are set in consultation with the Associate University Librarians (AULs) and the NSM Coordinator.

The Library Executive Committee (EC) posts plan on EC website at least one week prior to discussion with note to LIBNEWS-L requesting comment. EC & AULs review to ensure plan is feasible (e.g., can facilities work be accomplished within allotted time and budget?) in consultation with others in the Library, e.g., groups or individuals responsible for resource oversight: Budget Group (staff), EC (faculty/AP positions), Business Office, NSM Coordinator (NSM funding requests).

Working with the AULs, Library Facilities, Team Leaders, unit heads and other staff, the NSM Coordinator coordinates implementation of the plan.
December 30, 2012

Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries
Stanford University Library
Stanford, California 94305

Dear SPIRL Judges:

I write to support the nomination of the New Service Models (NSM) program at the University of Illinois Library for the Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries. I first became aware of the NSM several years ago due to the University Library’s extensive opportunities for consultation with faculty on the new process, but I became much more familiar with the details of the NSM process in the summer of 2010 as I served on a campus Stewarding Excellence project team. The Stewarding Excellence teams were charged with thoughtfully and thoroughly evaluating how campus resources were used. I was assigned to the team focused specifically on the University Library.

In our initial discussions and examination of the University Library’s operations and processes, it quickly became clear that the University Library staff had already been undergoing an unusually intense and insightful period of self-examination and improvement. Indeed, a recurring theme of our meetings was a team member would identify some possible area for improvement or discussion, and we would soon learn that this very idea was already being implemented or it had been thoroughly discussed and another, better initiative implemented. It was, quite frankly, quite difficult to come up with ideas or suggestions that the library had not already been working on in some way, and it was obvious that this level of proactive evaluation and change was due to the NSM program.

The NSM initiative is unusual in that it is not a single innovation, but an innovative way to conceptualize the needs of the university in the future and adapt the library to meet those needs. There were many specific changes involved, but the core idea seemed to be a process by which the entire institution of the University of Illinois library could be responsive to the rapid changes in the information environment while protecting the enduring strengths of the library that are so important to the students, faculty, and other users.

As a communication scholar who is familiar with the research literature on organizational change, I was (and am) extremely impressed by the NSM. The original impetus of the program may have been the perception that resources were declining, but rather than creating panic, these
circumstances led to a process that fostered a sense of shared purpose between the library leaders and the university community. The amount of substantive consultation with, and input by, the appropriate stakeholders is extremely impressive. Enacting organizational change in this manner is very time consuming, but it also allows for more deliberative and better outcomes than a process that is quicker and more top-down. The end result is the University Library has been able to make some important changes in ways that both minimized any aversive impact on users and also allowed the interested users to have a real share in what was happening with the library.

I cannot stress enough how well the various changes have been handled. There are always a few people who would prefer that nothing ever change, but the lack of complaining about the major changes has been remarkable. If you had told me five years ago, for example, that some of the longstanding departmental libraries would be shuttered and merged into larger, more efficient operations, I would have been certain that this would have elicited an enormous amount of protest from the affected faculty. Instead, due to the thoughtful and inclusive process of deliberation, most stakeholders have accepted the changes and have even seen how the changes have led to services that are more congruent with contemporary and future needs.

My own experiences with the results of the NSM are typical, as the collections most pertinent to my own research were moved into a library with a number of allied disciplines. This happened only after our department was consulted more than once, and we were able to articulate our needs. In the end, I have not noticed any reduction in service, but our department has benefitted from the new structure in ways I would not have anticipated. For instance, the new arrangement actually allows for students to be able to access the librarians' expertise more often because more of the relevant materials and resources are housed in the same place. In my role as Associate Department Head, I have noticed that we have had a marked increase in the number of classes that formally use the library's services as part of this instruction (e.g., to improve research papers). The library really is doing more with less for our department.

This success story has been repeated with a number of specific initiatives on campus. The repeated success is no accident—it is a direct result of the innovative process inherent in the New Service Models project. The NSM deserves to be honored, and I encourage you to award it the Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries.

Sincerely,

John P. Caughlin
Professor and Associate Head
Conrad Professorial Scholar
January 10, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to receive the Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries for its New Service Models program (NSM). (According to institutional practice, the university will be referred to subsequently as Illinois.) I am a librarian at the University of California, Davis, and my views are based on an extensive study of this library, which I discuss in a book that I am writing for the American Library Association (ALA). The book is entitled *The New Library: 4 Case Studies* and is due to be published in 2013. The book provides an overview of library history with an emphasis on trends of greatest importance today. These trends are studied in the context of four academic libraries, one of which is Illinois. While the four institutions are not strictly representative of the profession—if there is such a thing—each offers numbers of innovations which illuminate where the profession is now and the directions it might go in. Illinois is unsurpassed in its many achievements.

To understand the accomplishments of the NSM, context is necessary. Academic libraries, and the profession as a whole, are undergoing momentous change, perhaps greater than at any time in their history. The causes of change are too many and too well-known to list in full, but they derive in one way or another from the Information Revolution and a struggling economy. Such is the extent of these changes that libraries are forced to large-scale reorganization. A second point of context is that the vast majority of reorganizations fail. My own institution of UC Davis, which serves as another case study, has seen any number of reorganizations recently amidst changing leadership, and these initiatives have either failed or produced discord and resistance. The University of Hawaii at Manoa, another case study, just completed a lengthy reorganization process in which its highly professional staff underwent the full apparatus of administrative planning including workshops, retreats, multiple plan drafts through numbers of iterations only to fail to agree at the end of three years. My 13 years of librarianship, which includes another institution, have witnessed numbers of strategic plans that were poorly written, enormously time-consuming, extravagantly wasteful, and ultimately useless. The very volume and variety of discussion about reorganization in the literature and in conferences would seem to indicate that no one has yet hit on a workable method. This should come as no surprise. Perhaps the bulk of professional staff received their training in an era that did not foresee the magnitude of changes ahead and even today library schools are just beginning to work this topic into their curriculums. Small wonder that individuals without sufficient training or experience in administration do not succeed in the face of management challenges. Perhaps the best construction on the current state of things is that it is a period of
learning.

Amidst all this, the NSM at Illinois incorporates approximately 20 reorganizations of administrative units—some of which are ongoing. The library itself provides another context with both its size and storied history serving as challenges to be overcome. Illinois is one of the foremost examples of the decentralized research library, which has dominated the profession for much of its history but which no longer serves its purpose. The NSM, which provides a plan for reorganizing this library, has gained its achievements in spite of rather than because of tradition. The NSM deserve recognition because of the centrality of management issues to the profession and because of what the program has achieved.

Many elements of the NSM were not born fully armed out of nothing but appear in other reorganization plans. These elements include a solicitation for proposals; review and selection by a committee; the use of development and implementation teams; and other techniques of project management. But this commonality heightens the interest of the NSM. The aforementioned University of Hawaii initiative contained many of the same features and good intentions but did not succeed. Librarians as a group are quick to adopt “best practices” for planning without doing much better. What is the secret ingredient behind the NSM that allowed them to not only plan but execute and complete 20 different reorganizations, many equivalent to whole libraries elsewhere, all within the space of three years?

To understand this achievement, my book calls on the theories of a mostly forgotten thinker named John W. Boyd. An Air Force Colonel, Boyd dreamed of a theory of strategy so fundamental that it would apply in any competitive format, not just military conflict. His work is the basis for rhetoric of “decision cycling” that one hears in the discourse of business and policy. This and other terms are based on Boyd’s lesser known theory of the Observation, Orientation, Decision, Action (OODA) Loop. This procedure calls for a competitor to observe the environment to gather data, orient by formulating choices, decide by choosing among the options, and act to carry out the option. The concept of “decision cycling” states that carrying out this sequence at a higher speed than anyone else will bring competitive success. Yet even these concepts rely on others in Boyd’s work that are even less known. The speed of decision cycling itself depends on particular structures or procedures. They do not happen spontaneously or as an act of pure will. Boyd called the structural elements “fast transients”—the key features of an operation that enable speed of decision cycling. For the fighter planes that Boyd helped design, these could be instrument readouts or linkages to control surfaces. For a military organization, a command and communication structure. For a business, perhaps an executive team structure. For a football team, a no-huddle offense . . . The fast transients are specific to an environment, and they enable the speed of decision cycling that is crucial. My claim is that the success of the NSM are based on finding the fast transients that enable administrative success
for libraries.

These structural elements include the following. Dean Paula Kaufman has told me that it has been critical for her to maintain connections with university administrators at the highest level to know their interests and plans so that she can direct the library in ways that will be supported. Another element was an executive team for the NSM that, as part of university bylaws, was elected by the library staff and thus transparent (avoiding a major stumbling block in library reorganization). There was also a pervasive effort to reach out and dialogue with academic units through meetings at the departmental level and by including instructional faculty on development teams and (at least initially) on implementation teams. Kaufman and her staff also conducted town halls for the university community to express itself. But avoiding the temptation to proselytize, Kaufman and her staff set their goal as “listening” withholding response except for statements that were truly “outrageous.” In the course of all this, the NSM encountered resistance both without and within the library staff itself of the kind that is commonly seen in other libraries, but unlike most of those, the NSM was able to persevere and complete an astonishing amount in a short time. I believe it is due to fast transients such as the above that explain the almost clairvoyant quality of the NSM to know when to push, when to hold back, and when to change direction. These are all the features of rapid decision cycling that lead to success.

A final structural element is representative of the whole process and also addresses a major issue in administrative reorganization. It is almost a cliché in reorganization, derived from the academic field of Organizational Development, that a reorganization must not be entirely top-down. Neither must it be entirely bottom-up. While ruling out two courses of action, this reasoning leaves a middle layer containing an infinity of other choices. Illinois has gone beyond clichés to come up with a unique new direction. When faced with selecting among 60 different proposals for the NSM, the executive committee employed the following “Principles of Decision Making”:

Recognizing the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of academic inquiry, new service models will focus primarily on the creation of “hubs” that provide coordination and access to human expertise and content across disciplinary clusters, including both print and digital resources from the Library system. While physical space may play some role in these changes, digital information resources and new service delivery models will play a primary role in the development of these models.

This is effectively a description of a fast transient—a formulation of the virtual, the real, technology, and procedure into a nodal point that optimizes the function of the library. Thus some NSM consist of a consolidation of departments into a larger unit. Others take the form of
new services. Yet others dissolve old units and replace them with embedded librarians. Controlling all of these various choices is a perception of operational efficiency that transcends old categories and understands the importance of decision cycling.

It is worth noting that many of the individual NSM projects represent enormous innovation and deserve recognition in their own right. The Scholarly Commons represents an advance upon the basic Learning Commons model that is pitched to advanced researchers and does the necessary work of introducing them to the appropriate technology for their disciplines. The Literatures and Languages Library consolidates print collections and is at the forefront of Digital Humanities which has the potential to change scholarly practice. Yet, the specific recommendation here is for the NSM as a whole, which provides a framework within which these innovations can thrive. Academic libraries would profit from examining the NSM in detail.

For these reasons, I heartily endorse the NSM for your award, and I would be happy to discuss this further. My apologies for the length, but the many achievements of the NSM deserve no less, even in overview.

Regards,

Matt Conner
Instruction/Reference Librarian
Peter J. Shields Library
University of California, Davis
Dear Council Members,

This is to support the nomination of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library for a Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries.

Two years ago, the chancellor, provost, and deans at Illinois undertook as broad review of key units on campus in response to dwindling resources, technological change, and the explosion of knowledge in nearly every academic discipline. I chaired a task force charged with evaluating the University Library, and we were quickly impressed by the far-reaching changes that the Library’s “New Service Model” had introduced.

In this New Service Model process, the University Library implemented a sweeping reorganization and consolidation of resources to position the Library well for the future of academic research. Nothing less than a rethinking of the purpose and methods of librarianship informed a process that involved regrouping collections, modernizing delivery of information, and a carefully thought-out integration of digital and paper records. Despite predictions of a deterioration of service, this reorganization proved successful, maintaining excellent service while adopting new modes of delivery and slowing rises in library costs.

The University Library at Illinois had long been more decentralized than most of its peers with more than thirty discipline-themed libraries spread across campus. In the New Service Model, many smaller departmental libraries were merged with other units, but at the same time, the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary scholarship required the revision of previously sacred demarcations of human knowledge. In balancing financial realities with sustaining excellent service, the purpose of the New Service Model was to retain deep subject expertise and rich collections while providing a more seamless experience for students and faculty.
In short, the New Service Model program, formally launched in 2007, had the goal of identifying sustainable models for library service and introducing innovative approaches to address the evolving needs of scholars and students. In surveying the intellectual synergies across the departmental-library structures, the Library sought opportunities to bring together related subjects, collections, and expertise in larger configurations. With fewer individual branches, individual subject librarians now have fewer day-to-day operational and managerial responsibilities, so they can more directly support scholarly activities in the units they serve.

For example, the librarians assigned to the School of Labor and Employment Relations, the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS), and Global Studies now oversee “virtual” libraries but have offices in academic departments. The Library and Information Science Library was closed, and the LIS librarian was “embedded” in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS), serving the interdisciplinary needs of GSLIS faculty and students through office hours in the school itself, not in the main library. A sophisticated research web portal was developed, and the embedded librarian now actively participates in the School’s research and even teaching programs.

A prime innovation of the New Service Model was the development of a “Scholarly Commons.” The Scholarly Commons provides research support services to faculty and graduate students in areas such as data services, e-scholarship, and scholarly communications. This new, collaborative approach provides faculty, researchers and students access to experts in digital content creation and analysis; scholarly communication; geospatial, textual, and numeric data analysis; and innovative teaching and learning methods. This special unit has been instrumental in winning over Luddite professors who had been bewildered by recent changes in the dissemination of scholarship.

The New Service Model process also looked at internal workflows and organizational structures related to cataloging and acquisitions, digital content management, and stacks services with a focus on enhancing collaboration and efficiency across a large and geographically dispersed organization. Through this process, the Library made significant progress in reallocating resources toward critical projects and tackling long-standing issues of deferred collection maintenance by processing backlogs of uncataloged gift collections and other materials so that these resources are now available for scholars.

I must leave it to experts to describe the many particular innovations of this New Service Model. Suffice it to say that my task force was deeply impressed by the Library’s courage in undertaking such a vast reorganization and gratified by the increased efficiencies that this program introduced.

Very truly yours,

Robert Graves
Dean emeritus
January 9, 2013

Susan E. Searing
Interim Associate University Librarian for User Services
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
246E Main Library, 1408 West Gregory Drive
Urbana, Illinois 61801 USA

Ms. Searing,
I am pleased to nominate Paula Kaufman for the Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries. The New Service Models program of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Library has gained global attention and was an inspiring example when Berkeley began its Re-Envisioning Library Services a year ago. I speak from experience on the global exposure, since I have lectured on the same platform with Paula in Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and India, and found that in these emerging research powerhouses, the organizational simplicity she has brought to her campus libraries are an attractive model. She has integrated her ground-breaking work on the Return on Investment of Libraries into these presentations.

We (Berkeley and research libraries writ large) are looking at new service models to be able to shift from our historic staffing and services to also being able to accommodate new demands, albeit with more limited resources. The fact that research libraries have particularly diverse demands from our user populations means that we learn a lot from each other simply by considering the choices each has made.

The resistance at Illinois to a change in the footprint of libraries was legendary. Chancellor Bob Berdahl began his career as Chancellor at Berkeley in the late 1990s, looking back on these attitudes when he had led Illinois as Vice Chancellor. Remarkably, Illinois had even more branch libraries than Berkeley. Circa 2000 we may have looked more modern than Illinois in that we had already created an international and area studies department, had already merged government documents into our MAIN library social sciences collections and staffing, no longer had a separate library school collection/library, and had merged five science libraries in new quarters. It is also the case that Paula moved ahead with more physical volumes to manage, an LC-Dewey hybrid, and a more complicated consortium (CIC) than ours (UC-CDL).

In our self study we learned from Illinois. But we have not had to do the heavy lifting accomplished by Paula and her team. Perhaps only Harvard had an organization more in need of re-engineering than Illinois, and I expect that no ARL library has gone through such extensive change and found such even ground. Paula’s leadership, which has always been inclusive and on a national scale, truly deserves recognition. Even on the cusp of retirement as UL, she inspires us all.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Thomas C. Leonard
University Librarian
Dear Colleagues:

I write in support of the nomination of the University of Illinois Library’s New Service Models (NSM) initiative for the SPIRL Prize. Let me first explain why I am in a position to evaluate NSM, the context in which it occurred, and then do that evaluation.

Other than a few months off for good behavior, from 1997-2011, I served on or chaired the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Senate Committee on the Library (SCL), the faculty-student group tasked with overseeing the Library. We were the conduit for suggesting, demanding, adjusting, modifying, or imploring the Library to serve the needs of the campus. When I first joined the committee, electronic publication was just at the tipping point where resources had to be massively reallocated from print to bytes to keep up with publishing trends, and the changes involved were wrenching. Faculty change more slowly than students, and all of us seemed to be changing more slowly than the publishing/distribution of information. By the mid-2000’s, we had moved much content to electronic form, our University Librarian, Paula Kaufman, and her able librarians, had seemingly adapted to modern realities. We had apparently entered an Era of Good Feeling. Just as in the eponymous situation in the 19th century in US politics, that era was short-lived, and the reason was similar: things had changed, but not enough.

The pressures on our Library are those with which you are doubtless familiar: space designed for print, restrained financial resources, ever growing demand for new forms of information supplied by a staff many of whom were comfortable with older forms, aging facilities, and a faculty torn between “maintain all the old stuff while gradually moving to the new” and “why don’t the students use the Library instead of Google?” Into this conflicted, stressed situation came the NSM. The goal was to redirect resources so that we were building for the 2000-teens, rather than being hampered by the leftovers of the 20th century. This required vision to anticipate where we needed to go, thick skin to deal with the howls of protest from old-line faculty (some of them still in their thirties!), and gritty determination to decide what advice was insightful vs. that which was simply Luddite. Perhaps the most interesting (and long-running) lesson was one of culture and identity. For some parts of the University, the physical space assigned to a discipline was so associated with that discipline by alumni, faculty, and staff that any attempt to rearrange or reduce that space was, initially, unacceptable to the stakeholders. What sense does it make to have 5000 square feet, presided over by a tenured librarian, dedicated to a collection that no student ever sees (except electronically) and the faculty only see when they’re giving alumni tours? Yet, the reaction to repurposing that space was about at the level we see when some politician proposes to reduce Social Security payments.

Into this fray, Librarian Kaufman sent Joann Jacoby and the New Service Models team. Over a period of years, various departmental or area libraries were merged, remodeled, closed, reoriented, and improved. The recession, coupled to the long-standing fiscal mismanagement of the State of Illinois, made it imperative to “do more with less,” because otherwise we would have to “do less with less.” Instead of whining or hand-wringing, the NSM team surveyed the situation, consulted widely, accommodated where
that was the wise course, and stood its ground when that was the wise way forward. By the time the program was formally completed in 2012 (though the process will, doubtlessly, continue under a different moniker), not only was the physical footprint of the Library reduced, not only had antiquated approaches been terminated, but some groups not already affected had accepted that NSM-like changes would shortly occur and would be welcomed. While we still have a Chemistry Library (at one time, “the largest free-standing chemistry library at any university”), it is widely accepted that within a very few years, the space will be repurposed as a study hall, the monographs will move to either the Agriculture or Engineering library facilities, the Chemistry Librarian will free-float, separate from the collection, and access to information will be even better than it already is. Who would have predicted that such attitudes would evolve? It came from watching how NSM improved access in other areas, and how redirecting resources enhanced rather than limited quality access to information. It came from hearing shrill cries of how NSM would destroy areas of scholarship, but then seeing that the careful optimization of resource allocation opened opportunities for new areas while bringing older areas in for a soft landing.

The nomination package for NSM doubtless lists the specifics of what was changed, and the dynamic adjustment of Library policy in a short time is worthy of award in its own right. But the diligent process of getting faculty and student buy-in to changes, of ensuring that visionary and Luddite alike were heard, is a model for others. I am no librarian, but I have seen attempts at changing Library policy done in ways that inflame and ways that enlighten. NSM did the latter, and it is for that reason that I most heartily support the U of I’s application for the SPIRL prize.

Sincerely,

Alexander Scheeline
Professor of Chemistry Emeritus
Assistant Editor, Journal of the Analytical Sciences Digital Library
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

Graduate School of Library and Information Science
Library and Information Science Building
501 East Daniel Street
Champaign, IL 61820-6211

January 8, 2013

Judging Committee
Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries (SPIRL)

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the New Service Models program of the University of Illinois Library for the Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries (SPIRL). My experience with New Service Models spans multiple roles—member of the Communications-LIS team, team leader of the Health Information Services team, and faculty member and administrator in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS). I have been a user of the Library since 1971 when I began studies for the MS in library science—a time when GSLIS was literally embedded within the Main Library building, with offices and classrooms adjacent to the Library Science Library. Now 42 years later, thanks in large part to the New Service Models initiative, LIS faculty and students are served by a Virtual LIS Library and embedded LIS librarian, critical to provision of services to both our on-campus and growing population of online faculty and students.

Communications-LIS Team. This team was one of the first in the NSM effort, receiving its charge in August 2008 with the primary focus to “identify how and where to most effectively provide Library services to all disciplines and all communities engaged in the fields of Library & Information Science and Communications Studies giving due consideration to the shifting demographics of these academic programs, the interdisciplinary nature of these fields, and the limitations of the available Library spaces.” The team was carefully constituted to include faculty representatives from the relevant academic programs, the Heads of the Communications and LIS Libraries, and other Library faculty and staff. Discussion of possible service models was informed by relevant data already in hand as well as data specifically gathered to inform the team’s deliberations. These efforts led to recommendations to retain the Communications Library as a physical service point, to close the LIS Library (space now repurposed as the Scholarly Commons, another new service initiative), and to implement a more robust virtual LIS Library and embedded librarian service. This demonstrated the ability of a team to assess a range of possible service models and to recommend different approaches, depending on the needs of the primary stakeholders served by a particular departmental library.

Health Information Services Team. This team was charged with planning for the future of health-related library services to faculty, students, and practitioners, recognizing the growing importance of health-related research and teaching on the Urbana-Champaign campus. Team membership was purposefully chosen to represent the key faculty stakeholders (each of the departments in the College of Applied Health Sciences, a faculty member with a joint appointment in the UIC College of Medicine, and a faculty member in food and human nutrition
from the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences), the relevant Library faculty (from the Applied Health Sciences Library, the UIC Library of the Health Sciences Urbana branch, the Veterinary Medicine Library, one librarian from the Education & Social Sciences Library), as well as an Associate University Librarian and a library support staff member from the Applied Health Sciences Library. Though some faculty participants were concerned with the potential loss of a separate departmental library, they engaged in thoughtful discussions, gathered and considered relevant data, and encouraged colleagues to provide input through attendance at open meetings and responses to draft documents. The work of this team laid the groundwork for the service model that is now being implemented in the consolidated Social Sciences, Health, and Education Library (integrating the formerly separate Applied Health Sciences Library) which includes a newly recruited Biomedical Sciences librarian to fill a gap identified by the Health Information Services Team. This demonstrates a willingness to realign staffing, space allocation, and services to meet emerging campus needs.

NSM as a model for future librarians. As an LIS educator at Illinois since 1977, I often reflect on how the University Library shapes our students’ views of research librarianship. For most of the 20th century the service model emphasized was a large number of departmental libraries closely aligned with specific academic departments and disciplines and the building up of world-class physical collections. But thanks largely to the NSM initiative my students now have a tangible model of how a research library can undertake significant changes (broad consultation, transparency in decision-making) and what can be accomplished (consolidating service points, developing enhanced virtual collections and services, emphasis on embedded librarians rather than embedded physical collections, and filling new roles—building digital repositories, serving as consultants in the scholarly commons, and so on).

In summary, the New Service Models is impressive for its scope, its outcomes, and the change in culture which will ensure ongoing assessment and evolution of services. This should enable the University Library to remain an essential partner in fulfilling the University mission to “transform lives and serve society by educating, creating knowledge and putting knowledge to work on a large scale and with excellence.”

Sincerely,

Linda C. Smith
Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Programs
January 7, 2013

Stanford University Libraries
2013 Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to provide a letter of support on behalf of the nomination of the New Service Models (NSM) program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign Libraries for the 2013 Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries (SPIRL). The research university library and its system of libraries at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is similar in many ways to the UIUC libraries; a complex organizational infrastructure providing support for research, teaching and learning across a broad range of academic disciplines. Many of the organizational challenges that have been or are being identified and addressed by the New Service Models program are also present here including severe budget restrictions, a rapidly changing relationship between the University and the State, and massive changes in higher education.

In September of 2009, I invited Paula Kaufman, Dean of Libraries at UIUC, to share the NSM process and philosophy with the entire library staff here at UW-Madison. We were immediately drawn to the model because of its principle focus on service improvements in this complex environment. Its project management foundation includes broad staff and campus engagement, a completely transparent and well-documented process, and assessment outcomes and communication.

Even though we were at the bottom of a very deep recession, the principle focus on service improvements rather than cost savings was significant. And because Illinois was so very public about its entire process we were able to identify opportunities to replicate their successes here. Subsequent conversations here regarding strategic planning, consolidation/merger planning, and staff efficiencies have relied heavily upon the NSM project management approach for overall service improvement. We continue to consult the NSM using it as a blueprint for our work here.

The NSM is a noteworthy example of an individual research university library having the courage of leadership to devote significant but clearly limited resources for sustained innovation in its operational areas. That priority and commitment to service improvements in a very large, complex research university library organization is impressive at every level. I do hope that you will strongly consider the New Services Model program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s University Library for the 2013 Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries (SPIRL). Please let me know if you require additional information and thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward V. Van Gemert
Interim Director of Libraries
General Library System

General Library System
Office of the Director
372 Memorial Library  University of Wisconsin-Madison  728 State Street  Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1494
608/262-2600  Fax: 608/265-2754  www.library.wisc.edu