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Library Advocacy in the Campus Environment

Jean Zanoni

Marquette University, jean.zanoni@marquette.edu

Scott Mandernack

Marquette University, scott.mandernack@marquette.edu

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Library Advocacy in the Campus Environment

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Jean Zaroni and Scott Mandernack

It is often assumed that faculty, students, staff, administrators, and others associated with institutions of higher education understand the inherent value of the academic library's services and resources, yet recent trends of diminishing reference transactions, declining gate counts, and the competition from the web for ubiquitous access to information may suggest otherwise. Surrounded by growing numbers of alternative information service providers, libraries increasingly find themselves in what Hughes refers to as "competitive space," and the role of the library as "primary aggregator and purveyor of content to its community is less and less unique."¹ Furthermore, in higher education, "the value of a library to the university's mission and its priority in the university's allocation of funds can no longer be assumed.... As institutions make difficult decisions about where to allocate precious resources, libraries are faced with effectively defending their worth to campus administrators."²

The academic library's vision is informed by the institution it serves. If the library cannot fulfill its role of optimizing access to information in support of the institutional mission of fostering research & discovery, teaching & learning, and service & engagement, or if that information is more readily available elsewhere, the library risks losing its relevancy. In the face of these developments it becomes essential for college and university libraries to actively promote their place in the academy and to communicate the value and benefits of the library to the campus and its diverse audiences.

"If librarians are committed to sustaining their role as providers of an important common good in the emerging turbulent competitive space of higher education... it will take energy, an in-depth knowledge of our users' preferences and the changes they face, and a willingness to grapple with ambiguity

and complexity on a daily basis... [It] may behoove librarians to experiment more, get out of the library building and talk to people who don't use the library, and get involved with the issues that are shaping higher education in general."³

With the advent of new and emerging information and communication technologies, and the evolving role of libraries in the scholarly communication process, college and university libraries have the opportunity and the obligation to position themselves as central to the intellectual and educational mission and goals of the campus.

Successfully advocating for libraries in their new roles within the higher education landscape will be predicated on understanding the needs and behaviors of current and potential users and thoroughly educating our constituencies of the value of libraries to the mission of the institution. Libraries must constantly demonstrate how they can enhance, facilitate, and promote the education and scholarly production of the faculty, students, staff, administration, alumnae, and other stakeholders. In order for libraries to thrive amidst the competition from multiple information providers, as well as from other campus departments and units, a multifaceted marketing campaign addressing each unique audience with a consistent yet targeted message must become a strategic initiative in order to actively and effectively communicate to the campus community the value and benefits of the library's services and resources.

Advocacy through Strategic Planning

For libraries that have adopted the practice of strategic planning, communicating the library's message and establishing its brand to the wider campus community can begin with the strategic planning process itself. Strategic planning can provide "wonderful public relations opportunities and can serve as the vehicle for moving the library more dynamically into the university environment."⁴ However, it should be noted that strategic planning for academic libraries will likely have greater impact when library administrators and staff understand the political nature of the decentralized academic system within which they operate and how decisions are made in their institutions. The pluralistic character of the university environment, in which different campus groups use various forms of political power to pursue their own self-interests and those they view as best for the

institution, cannot be ignored. Strategic planning based on political decision-making rather than rational decision-making is often more effective in the academic environment.⁵ The political decision-making planning model begins with issues, "which by definition involve conflict, not consensus.... As efforts proceed to resolve these issues, policies and programs emerge to address them that are politically rational; that is, they are politically acceptable to involved or affected parties.... The various policies and programs are, in effect, treaties among the various stakeholders."⁶ Certainly, the inclusion of representatives from multiple campus constituencies in the strategic planning process—as members of a steering committee, working groups, or focus groups, for example—ensures that additional perspectives on library services and resources are given due consideration in assessing and planning for the future. However, it also serves to inform and educate those stakeholders about the issues facing the library and its vision for the future. Such a collaborative and inclusive visioning process can "set the stage for engaging university officials, faculty, and other major stakeholders in discussions about institutional policies and priorities for library resources and services,"⁷ ultimately leading to the goal of generating alliances, coalitions, and advocacy from a broad base of current and potential user groups.

A critical component of any library's strategic planning process is communicating the library's message to the campus community. The most effective strategic plans have a clear sense of their potential readerships, and the strategic directions should be clearly aligned with both the institutional goals and particular interests of key stakeholders.⁸ An organizational commitment to telling the "library story" can facilitate strategic planning and the achievement of organizational goals, and can be effectively articulated through a strategic marketing planning process. The strategic marketing planning process is a cyclical, data-driven, comprehensive, decision-making process that is based on market research of the target audiences. It includes four essential steps: customer and market research, strategic planning, promotion, and the provision of products and services. This continuous process is framed by user needs—those that are being met and those that are unmet. "Strategic marketing provides libraries a process through which audience research can be conducted and its results used to deliver the most relevant product or message in the most audience-appropriate way to capture the attention and understanding of the audience."⁹ The American Library Association's *@ your*

library Toolkit for Academic and Research Libraries: Messages, Ideas, and Strategies for Promoting the Value of Our Libraries and Librarians in the 21st Century identifies the following elements of a strategic marketing plan:

- the context of current and future challenges and opportunities facing the library;
- goals and objectives to be accomplished;
- a positioning statement, defining the desired image of the library as perceived by others;
- the key messages to be delivered;
- prioritized target audiences;
- implementation strategies for delivering the key messages;
- evaluation measures¹⁰

When considering the audiences of the academic library, it is important to differentiate among them because each brings different expectations and perceptions of needs for library services and resources. As articulated by Conley and Tucker¹¹, there are many ways of identifying and labeling targeted markets. Markets may be divided into primary and secondary markets, where the primary audience is comprised of on-campus groups, such as students, faculty and staff, and the secondary audience includes those outside the campus community. Similar, but with a slightly different perspective, markets may be divided into internal and external, where internal audiences are directly associated with the university (students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumnae, friends groups, etc.) and external audiences are not (media outlets, community leaders, community organizations, schools, companies, etc.). There are a few other possibilities for identifying markets, including distinguishing audiences by their relationship to the organization or by specifying geographic, demographic, behavioral, psychographic, and lifestyle groups. Relationship marketing emphasizes customer retention and establishing long-term relationships between the customer and the organization. In the context of academic libraries, the relationships may be customer markets (students, faculty, university staff and administrators), internal markets (employees and departments of the library), supplier and alliance markets (publishers, vendors, etc.), referral markets (satisfied patrons or early adopters of library services), recruitment markets (venues for attracting and training qualified employees), and influence markets (boards of directors/trustees, friends groups, legislators, etc.). Which-ever market segmentation strategy is employed, the distinct audience

groups must satisfy certain criteria in order to be targeted successfully: each must be homogenous, accessible, and measurable.

Effective promotional and advocacy implementation strategies will approach each group with different messages, using different media, directed at addressing the unique needs and perceptions of each. Additionally, consideration should be given to the frequency and timing of the communication to each group. This strategic approach to marketing, promotion, and advocacy should lead to more effective services, greater visibility, and ultimately improved funding.¹²

In addition to the obvious distribution of the strategic plan document to key administrators and other major stakeholders on campus, other proven methods of message distribution include:

- Word of mouth. This type of distribution is thought by some to be more credible than other marketing techniques because it originates from people who have no vested interest in persuading another to use the product or service, and therefore are not inclined to distort the truth. "The power of word-of-mouth marketing lies in its honesty."¹³ Alire further outlines several approaches to word of mouth marketing, including the use of experts (e.g. advisory groups of students, faculty, or donors; early adopters of library services or resources, etc.); participation (by librarians or other advocates) in seminars, workshops, or programs; canned word of mouth, i.e. preparing presentations that may be used by others; referral selling (testimonials); and, networking and increasing visibility at campus events and meetings.
- Banners, posters, or displays highlighting library-related events, or library and information resources associated with campus issues and/or events.
- Handouts/giveaways (i.e. bookmarks, mugs, pens, etc.) at orientation and other campus events.
- Campus and community media outlets (newspapers, radio, TV) to raise awareness of library issues, events, or changes, or the connection of the library/information to campus initiatives, etc.
- Print materials, such as a newsletter, flyers, table tents, annual reports, etc.
- Web sites.
- E-mail lists.

- Online course management systems, integrating library resources and services with course assignments or general assistance.
- Collaborations with other campus and community departments, units, or organizations.

Strategically utilizing these various approaches with the key campus constituencies, as determined by careful and deliberate audience analysis, will optimize campus partnerships and offer the greatest potential for successful integration of the library's goals into institution-wide planning efforts.

Advocacy with University Administration and Administrative Units

It is critically important for libraries to understand the organizational climate, culture, and structures of the local campus environment in order to strategically position themselves in the planning and decision-making processes that occur throughout campus. The institutional culture itself will be defined, in part, by the nature and type of the institution, whether community college, liberal arts college, comprehensive college/university, doctoral granting or research institution. Among these institutions, there is a continuum of value and degree of emphasis placed on undergraduate teaching and learning, graduate education, research and discovery, and service and engagement. The generalization typically holds that, as we move from two-year colleges to research universities the emphasis changes from a local to a more global perspective. Another factor that contributes to the institutional culture is the institution's base of support, whether publicly or privately funded.¹⁴ The library's role and mission in each of these environments will necessarily conform to the institutional culture, which will have an impact on the library mission, message, communication channels, and opportunities for collaboration and partnerships. Furthermore, each segment of the academic community (college, school, department, administrative unit, etc.) comprises a distinct culture, often with subcultures within it. Understanding the unique aspects of each of those subcultures will contribute significantly to the library's ability to successfully articulate and promote its brand message and advocate for support and resources among its diverse constituencies and stakeholders.

Equally essential in the strategic positioning of the library is for the library to become familiar with the institution's strategic plan. It

must be understood intimately and the library's mission and goals directly related to it. Demonstrating how library initiatives will benefit the campus and advance the strategic plan ensures a broader understanding of the value of the library to the institutional mission and, therefore, a broader base of support. "The greatest potential for alliances occurs when library goals become a prominent part of the institution's priorities."¹⁵

Communicating to the component departments or units of the institution with messages or initiatives that emphasize how the library can enhance, facilitate, support and promote what they value will help them recognize their interdependence on the library, thereby leading to stronger campus partnerships and greater support. Academic libraries forge campus partnerships for a number of reasons: furthering the institutional goals; building relationships with key user groups and constituencies; and/or obtaining additional funding.¹⁶ Other campus concerns which may benefit from creative use of library resources and services include promoting more effective and productive campus operations, enhancing fundraising efforts, fostering campus/high school relations, recruiting and retaining students, contributing to faculty development, and addressing globalization concerns.¹⁷

Campus librarians can assist campus administrators in academic decision-making by collecting and organizing relevant information, instructing administrative staff in accessing and evaluating information, and participating directly in campus planning groups. Supporting the institution's mission to be more engaged with the community may be effectively accomplished through partnerships with the library and the educational opportunity office, student recruitment and retention programs, and/or campus multicultural centers. Fostering information and communication technology literacy among the students may be best addressed in collaboration with the campus information technology (IT) division, instructional support services, the writing center, departmental faculty, and/or the faculty governance organization. Providing library services and access to resources for alumnae may require the cooperation of IT, the alumnae association, and/or the advancement office. Accreditation reviews may be strengthened with evidence of levels of access to information resources and/or student learning outcomes of information literacy, compiled through joint efforts of the library and the campus assessment office or institutional research office. Campus librarians can assist campus administrators in academic decision-making by collecting

and organizing relevant information, instructing administrative staff in accessing and evaluating information, and participating directly in campus planning groups.

The relationship of libraries to campus computing centers or IT departments continues to be an issue of great concern on college and university campuses. Technological advances have driven some of the most dramatic changes in libraries in recent years, yet few campus units outside the libraries truly understand the depth of the impact, causing a gap between expectations and reality and an underutilization of library resources and services. Successful integration of new and emerging information technology into the university mission requires tremendous cooperation between libraries and IT. The very different backgrounds and perspectives of library and IT personnel have been characterized as involving organizational culture, social distinctions, compensation differentiation, subcultural patterns, and dissimilar professional backgrounds. These differences may pose very real challenges to meaningful collaboration, but thoughtful planning, investment in staff development, and clearly articulated service goals can lead to very promising results in providing seamless support to scholars and students.¹⁸

Understanding the mission and goals of other campus offices, and demonstrating their interrelatedness to the library's mission and goals, can build on already established programs, thereby advancing the library's contributions to the campus while also furthering the goals and objectives of the other offices. Bunnell¹⁹ quotes Larry A. Braskamp and John F. Wergin, stating that "collaboration does not occur without the partners spending time together to foster mutual trust." The best partnerships are those in which the participants understand each other from their own individual perspectives and work with the strengths of the partners and capitalize on their skills. The key is to continue the dialog with these units and to maintain an interest in the common issues and initiatives that have been established.

Advocacy with Faculty

Services to faculty must meet both their own teaching and research needs and support the needs of their students. Reaching faculty in either arena will lead to greater awareness of available services in the other. While all faculty share the common goal of promotion and tenure, they are a unique and diverse group of individuals. Faculty operate independently from their departmental colleagues and other faculty

on campus. The insular nature of faculty work, differences in research needs among disciplines, and the split between junior and senior faculty regarding differences in expectations and compensation and how disciplinary changes in scholarship are viewed²⁰ mean that serving faculty cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach. In a study that involved interviewing 300 faculty members from eight different institutions, a number of factors that impeded faculty collaboration were identified: Fragmented communication patterns that are the result of research specialization and the tendency for faculty to work in isolation²¹; limited resources which promote competition among faculty for funding; and lack of time due to the pressures of teaching, research, and administrative duties to interact with faculty colleagues. Also, the methods of evaluation and reward can put faculty at odds with each other. For example, the overemphasis on research and ineffective methods of assessing teaching can create resentment not to mention salary differentials that are perceived as unfair.²² Therefore, libraries must develop strategies to work with members of the campus faculty while simultaneously taking a broader perspective and looking at service to faculty as a whole in terms of support for teaching and research.

While faculty individual identity and self interest are important, how faculty members view academic libraries and librarians is a key component in defining the relationship between the two groups. According to the Ithaka report, *2006 Studies of Key Stakeholders in the Digital Transformation in Higher Education*, faculty are becoming less dependent on the library to meet their research and teaching needs, yet faculty continue to view the library's role as important.²³ Faculty most value the library's role as purchaser of the journals, books and databases necessary to support their teaching and research. They also value the library's role as repository and preserver of those resources. While librarians still consider the library a vital starting point for research, faculty members are beginning to view this gateway role as less important to their needs.²⁴ Librarians also place a high priority on providing service in support of faculty research, but the faculty often undervalues the consulting role of the librarian.²⁵ Academic libraries must bridge the gap between the faculty's belief that they will be less dependent on the library and the librarian's view that their role will continue to be important in the future. This provides a useful framework for academic library advocacy to faculty.

So what can the academic library do to provide support to faculty now and in the future? The library can serve in the role of "intel-

lectual ombudsman" and remove any obstacles to learning and the creation of new knowledge²⁶ through the provision of core services of instruction and access to resources. Since the library serves all academic departments, it is "uniquely situated to work at the nexus of disciplines,"²⁷ and the library can provide both space and resources in support of interdisciplinary research. The library is just one source for information, but librarians can serve as navigational guides to finding information that is either freely available on the Internet or that has been licensed by the library.²⁸ Academic libraries can position themselves as a key player in the transformation of scholarly communication if they seize the opportunity. The creation of digital repositories to collect, preserve and showcase institutional scholarship and educating faculty on the benefits of open access and authors' rights should be on the library's agenda.²⁹ The library can also provide institutional support for issues related to copyright, intellectual property and information policy. There are collaboration opportunities between faculty, librarians and educational technologists for data curation which encompasses archiving, organization and preservation of digital data sets being created by faculty and graduate student researchers.³⁰ Academic libraries can maintain their role as purchasers and repositories and enhance their gateway and consultative functions.

The role of the academic library in support of the faculty and their teaching and research endeavors can expand in a positive and fruitful manner yet librarians must be mindful of what roles the faculty want them to play or risk alienating them. Most tenure processes prefer traditional forms of publication, i.e., monographs and journal articles. Faculty who are seeking tenure still look to the library to provide the resources they need and could be unsupportive of any new initiative that may divert attention or resources from the library's traditional services. For example, many do not think of academic libraries in alternative roles such as data curation or a more direct involvement in student learning. The latter may have the unintended effect of allowing faculty to focus exclusively on their own research and thereby shortchanging their students.³¹ Therefore, it is essential that librarians and faculty collaborate on how best to serve the faculties' teaching and research needs.

Jason Kramer, Executive Director for the New York State Higher Education Initiative and recently hired as a legislative advocate for academic libraries in the state of New York, points out that "while

academic libraries have no passionate enemies, too many libraries have cultivated no passionate allies."³² Often the library's most vocal faculty supporters tend to be those who champion the library's traditional roles. A balance between ensuring that traditional needs are continually met and engaging with faculty on new initiatives must be maintained.³³ Faculty who support the library in turn can be the library's most influential advocates to faculty colleagues, administration and students. Greater engagement with faculty on issues both current and new, will ultimately lead to improved communication and more opportunities for collaboration.

Relationship building opportunities abound. Membership on university committees, attendance at campus events, involvement in campus activities are all avenues to promote the library. These activities serve as a method for the academic library to promote what it has to offer and provide opportunities for librarians to learn about campus initiatives in which the library can play a part. Keeping in mind the independent nature of the faculty, advocacy must also be pursued by interacting with faculty individually either formally or informally. Attention should be given to meeting the needs of and addressing the unique character of the institution the library supports, and the ways the larger institutional mission frames and influences the mission of the library itself.

Advocacy with Students

Identifying "students" as a single user group may be a gross oversimplification of this target audience, as today's student body is in fact tremendously diverse. Students at today's universities represent a heretofore unseen level of diversity in their racial and ethnic backgrounds, cultural heritages, socio-economic status, life experiences, and even their ages span a much larger divide than in the past. Nonetheless, some broad generalizations may be helpful in understanding how to develop effective messages to this segment of the campus population. Cox³⁴ offers what he feels are the primary characteristics of the millennial generation of students (those born between 1982 and 2002, representing the largest generation in history): they are ethnically and racially diverse; they are nontraditional; they expect choices and instant gratification; they are digital natives; they enjoy gaming and media; and, they learn best experientially and collaboratively. ACRL's *Power of Personal Persuasion: Advancing the Academic Library Agenda from the Front Lines*³⁵ identifies additional

characteristics of contemporary students as: practical, immediate problem solvers; autonomous and relevancy-oriented; prefer doing to knowing; motivated by accessibility, connectedness, advancement, and external expectations; are accustomed to change and fast-paced activities; have shorter attention spans; and blur lines between work, recreation, and "life." All of these characteristics significantly impact students' expectations and use of library services and resources, which in turn, have implications for how the library develops services and most effectively communicates with them.

Of interest when considering library marketing strategies to college students is the OCLC report, *College Students' Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership*,³⁶ which found that 70% of college students associate "library" first and foremost with "books."³⁷ The report further states that even though college students may be more aware of and familiar with library electronic resources than the general population, many are not sure what libraries offer.³⁸ In light of this evidence, the challenge facing the academic library today is to clearly define and market its services and resources and demonstrate its relevance to today's students. As the OCLC report concludes, "Rejuvenating the [library] brand depends on reconstructing the experience of using the library."³⁹

As previously stated, the most successful marketing and promotional strategies will clearly articulate the specific message, tailored for the target audience, utilizing the most effective medium. The wide variety of subgroups that may be differentiated within the student population—freshmen; undergraduate researchers; honors students; graduate students; nontraditional students; on-campus residents; commuters; distance learners; multicultural student groups; international students; fraternities/sororities; student organizations; student government; student advisory boards, and more—provides for countless opportunities to engage with students and inform them of library services and resources. Heeding the experiential, collaborative, "doing-versus-knowing" nature of college students, more active and programmatic marketing strategies that actively engage the students in an experience with the library may be more effective with this segment of the campus population. Building a sense of community between the students and the library will establish a relationship that encourages continuing interest and involvement, leading to additional partnerships and future advocates.

Some examples:

- Participate in freshmen orientation events, distributing giveaways and literature/information packets, offering presentations or tours, holding an open house, or developing fun activities that acquaint the students with aspects of the library.
- Sponsor research/multimedia project awards, incorporating use of information sources as criteria.
- Encourage submission of student research projects to the institutional repository, highlighting its promotional value to the student, emphasizing their role as a contributor rather than just a consumer of the literature, and providing an opportunity to underscore the ethical use of information (i.e., their work).
- Embed reference and instructional services and resources in the campus online course management system, providing ready access to resources and assistance, especially useful for distance or remote learners.
- Provide office hours, research consultations, or seminars to graduate students on effective research practices in their fields of study.
- Become a member/advisor/instructor of a learning community, promoting the library as a resource for both academic and social/recreational purposes.
- Host lectures, poetry readings, book discussions, or film viewings as tie-ins to other campus events or initiatives.
- Collaborate with students on class projects that analyze a library-related issue or problem and make recommendations for change and improvement.
- Collaborate with student organizations to archive and/or digitize their records, educating them about the value of record storage and management.
- Provide refreshments during late night hours of finals week.
- Sponsor gaming events as a means of promoting the "library as place" concept.
- Invite student participation in the library's strategic planning process, web site redesign projects, facilities remodeling projects, etc.
- Develop informational materials in various languages, with translation assistance by international students, to help those from other countries more easily acclimate to the library environment.

- Promote library events, resources, and services via Web 2.0 and social networking applications—the mediums that students use—such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, blogs, wikis, etc.
- Establish a student advisory board to elicit ongoing feedback and suggestions for continuous improvement of library services.

As Karle states, demonstrating the resourcefulness, versatility, and value of the library and its staff in creative and dynamic ways is crucial to leveraging the library's brand as useful and relevant to college and university students. "Rather than competing with technological advances in an adversarial manner, libraries and librarians need to position themselves as offering complementary, attractive, and relevant resources that supplement their students' media-filled lives... Academic libraries can create experiences that shape the perceptions and heighten the enthusiasm of their students in order to make the overall library experience more appealing."⁴⁰

Advocacy with Friends/Donors

Academic libraries look to external funding to supplement stagnant or decreased budgets, and therefore must extend advocacy efforts to potential and current donors. However, just as colleges and universities must justify to donors that they are worthy of their support, academic libraries must convince their administrations that they are essential and integral to the mission of the university and therefore worthy recipients of donor funds.

Standard arguments against soliciting donor support for the academic library are that it will divert donors' attention away from other university priorities and since no one graduated from the academic library, it does not have its own alumni donor constituency. Libraries can be hard to sell because most alumni have used the library, but no one owns it. Furthermore, donors may not know why the library needs money.⁴¹ Whether the library is involved directly in raising its own funds or supports the university's fundraising efforts, advocating to current and potential donors is essential.

In terms of defining an overall fundraising philosophy, Robert Wedgeworth urges academic libraries to put fundraising within the context of public relations and as part of the overall management of the library.⁴² Donor constituencies can have significant influence on the library, and therefore, their support must be consistent with the present and future plans and operations of the library. Librarians

must connect the strategic mission of the library to the public relations campaign and relate the interests and financial resources of the donor community to the library. However, as dollars become scarcer, librarians will need to articulate the societal importance of their work to those grant agencies and donors who do not traditionally support higher education and academic libraries.⁴³

Reaching out to potential donors requires an understanding of why people give and why they give to libraries. Donors' reasons for giving are based on what the library will do for the donor not what the donor will do for the library. Charitable giving can supply a sense of belonging and fulfill the esteem needs of approval and recognition. Some donors feel a moral obligation; some feel that if they give, they will receive.⁴⁴ When choosing what to support, donors need to believe in the cause or the institution. They give to visionary leaders and successful organizations. The library dean or director must be the key figure in fundraising and connecting with donors as he or she provides the vision, purpose and sense of mission to motivate donors.⁴⁵ Most importantly, donors need to be asked to give.⁴⁶ Few will make a donation without being asked.

OCLC recently issued a report outlining the attitudes and perceptions regarding public library funding. Even though the study focuses on public libraries, its findings can inform donor advocacy within the academic library. Library supporters do not equate the library's value with specific services or materials. It is the impact on and value of the library to the lives of individuals and to the community that really matter.⁴⁷ Shared values of probable and "super" supporters include involvement in their communities, recognition of the value of librarians, and belief that the library is relevant to the community. Interestingly, probable and "super" supporters are not necessarily heavy users of the library.⁴⁸ For the library to remain relevant, it cannot be just viewed as a historical institution or one that only provides information. It must be recognized as a transformational force and a necessity that will yield a return on investment for the individuals and community it serves.⁴⁹ (6-12). In light of these findings, messages to academic library donors should stress the value of the academic library to the institution and to society, and its role in learning, the transformation of students and support of faculty research.

Academic library donor advocacy can take several forms. Library friends groups can serve to advocate to members about the value of the library and the friends can act as library advocates to oth-

ers. Friends groups can promote the library within the community, sponsor fundraising events such as book sales, and make financial gifts to the library for collections and services. The provision of an alumni portal to select library resources provides both a service and a connection to the library which may encourage support. Reaching out to alumni and donors through an article on the library in the institution's alumni magazine is another strategy. This could serve to educate those who have graduated several years ago on the essential role that the library plays on campus. Parents of graduates can buy a book in their son's or daughter's name for the library. The library can also be the recipient of money from a senior class gift. Library sponsorship of alumni events, exhibitions, and concerts also contributes to increased awareness by getting people into the library building. These initiatives involve donors and potential donors in library-related activities, educate them on what the library has to offer and illustrate the value of the academic library.

The academic library has long been at the heart of the college campus, but its relevance and continued support cannot be taken for granted. Budget cuts and dwindling support from state governments for public institutions put academic libraries in direct competition with other academic departments, the very people they serve, and with other libraries for resources and external funding. Furthermore, the availability of freely accessible resources on the Web has challenged the assumption that the library is essential or even necessary. The colliding economic and technological forces may be considered a perfect storm. Academic libraries need to respond to changes in higher education, scholarly publishing and the information landscape and turn that perfect storm into the ultimate opportunity to redefine its role. Advocacy for academic libraries is paramount to their success now and as the library redefines its role within higher education.

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