PANEL: THRIVING AFTER SURVIVING LIBRARY CONSOLIDATIONS

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Abstract:
In response to budgetary realities and enabled by the growth of online collections, there is a trend in academic institutions to consolidate branch libraries. Library consolidation is challenging but can present new opportunities. As academic librarians closely involved in the changes at our three institutions, we reflect on our experiences and share the challenges we faced, lessons learned, and successful outcomes. In this paper we describe the restructuring at three large academic libraries on the west coast of North America that resulted in library consolidations, new service models and reconfigured spaces to meet changing user needs. Library consolidation is challenging but can present new opportunities. As academic librarians closely involved in the changes at our three institutions, we reflect on our experiences and share the challenges we faced, lessons learned, and successful outcomes.

Keywords: academic libraries, library consolidation, service models, user space

Part One: Woodward Library, University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Sally Taylor

Introduction
In 2012-2013, the University of British Columbia consolidated the Science & Engineering branch library and two off campus hospital libraries into the existing Woodward Library, integrating not only collections and services but also separate teams.

Background
When I started working at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 1997, the Woodward Biomedical Library, as it was called then, served the biological sciences and all the health disciplines. Now, 16 years
later, it is the Woodward Library, and we are THE science library on campus, serving all STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine) disciplines.

Library consolidations at UBC are certainly not unique in Canada. At the same time that the Science & Engineering library division in the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre merged with Woodward Library, the Life Sciences Library at McGill University in Montreal merged with the Schulich Library of Science and Engineering, and not without protest from staff and users. This year we also witnessed the closure of many federal government libraries. Of interest to IAMSLIC was the consolidation of 11 libraries at Fisheries and Oceans Canada into four. Library services will be offered at two primary locations, the Institution of Ocean Sciences in Sidney, British Columbia and the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. In addition, there will be two specialized collections at the Canadian Coast Guard College in Sydney, Nova Scotia and the Canadian Coast Guard Technical Library in Ottawa (Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2013).

**History of Library Consolidations at UBC**
At UBC, the consolidation of the science libraries began in 2007 with the closure of two libraries (Figure 1). The Math Library closed, and the collection was transferred to the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (IKBLC). The MacMillan Library also closed, and its collection was split between Woodward Library (forestry and agriculture) and IKBLC (wood science).

![Figure 1. Collection moves in 2007 as a result of the closure of Math and MacMillan libraries.](image)

In 2009/2010, the Library Processing Centre, which housed the library’s Technical Services and Systems groups, was identified by the University as space for a new School of Population & Public Health. As a result, Technical Services staff moved into half of the top floor of Woodward Library, necessitating a large collections move (Figure 2). At the same time, we took the opportunity to clear out compact shelving in the basement that was constantly broken. The solution was to move the collections to “Remote Storage,” temporary warehouse space in Surrey, a Vancouver suburb about 1.5 hours drive from campus. The material would be inaccessible for four years until a permanent storage location was built. With this in mind, we decided to move print journals that were available online. The University gave the Library one-time funding to purchase back files for 800 journal titles, enabling us to move a total of 1400 journal titles. To reach our goal, we also moved 38,000 older, low-use monographs.
temporarily to the Koerner Library and then eventually into the Automated Storage & Retrieval System (ASRS) in IKBLC.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 2. Collection moves in 2009/2010 as a result of technical services moving into Woodward Library.*

At a Town Hall in May 2012, the University Librarian announced that there would be a number of changes in the Library. These changes were implemented over the next 16 months. The closure of the Music Library and consolidation with the Art, Architecture & Planning library division in IKBLC precipitated the move of Science & Engineering into Woodward Library. The President’s Office moved into the top two floors of Koerner Library (Humanities & Social Sciences), and the small business library at Robson Square, UBC’s downtown campus, closed. Perhaps the most shocking news at the Town Hall was the possible closure of two of the three libraries located off campus at the affiliated UBC Teaching Hospitals. After almost a year of uncertainty, the Library made the decision to close the Hamber Library at the Children’s & Women’s Health Centre of British Columbia and the St. Paul's Hospital Library, and to offer library services to these user groups remotely. In the final tally, the Library moved almost 1 million items (Figure 3).

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 3. Collection moves in 2012/2013 as a result of library closures and consolidations.*
The move to accommodate the integration of collections from Science & Engineering and the two hospital libraries into Woodward Library was complicated. Not only were we moving collections between buildings, we were also dealing with multiple sub-locations within buildings such as course reserve, reference, current journals, stacks and storage (Figure 4). We ended up moving 90,000 items to the ASRS and more than 200 journal titles to Remote Storage in Surrey. At every stage, we weeded low use duplicates, which was a huge project for the hospital collections and is still ongoing.

![Figure 4. Rough diagram showing collection moves between several locations and sub-locations.](image)

**What Worked Well?**

Despite the scope and ambitious timeline, the most recent collection moves were successful due to a number of factors, most notably ones related to the overall management. The project was well supported by the Collection Management and Planning (CMP) Librarian in Technical Services and a Collections Management Coordinator who was hired specifically to manage the moves. In addition to the 50 staff involved across the system, the Library hired a team of 20 students who were well trained to move books, measure shelving and change records. Given the widespread impact of the move, a Collections Move Management Team (CMMT) was established with representatives from the affected branches as well as units that were critical to the success of the move, namely Borrower Services, Technical Services, Library Systems & Information Technology and the ASRS. Initially meetings were held weekly for planning and discussions, tapering off as specific moves were completed. Given the pace of change, the Coordinator and the CMP Librarian released weekly communiqués in the staff bulletin to provide specific details on the moves to all librarians and staff.

In addition to overall management, elements relating to data integrity and technology contributed to the quality and efficiency of the project. Prior to the collection moves, inventories were done in almost all library branches to identify missing items and fix records, which meant we started the collections analysis with reliable data. We used Voyager reports to make decisions for weeding duplicate copies as well as for moving unique titles into storage based on publication year and circulation statistics. The
CMP Librarian and Coordinator learned to massage the Voyager data to make the reports more useful. For example, they added a sortable call number column and a “Likely Publication Year” which strips out the copyright symbol and other date variations making it easier to filter and sort. One seemingly minor change in technology since the last collection move but which made an enormous difference for the analysis was the upgrade to MS Office 2010 which has a feature in MS Excel to sort and filter by colour. In deciding which journals to move to the Remote Location, I called in the assistance of our licensing specialist who checked each title for post-cancellation rights or perpetual access, something I had failed to do in the previous move which had led to a few titles being inaccessible. Library Systems & Information Technology developed an in-house program called iMove to permit students or staff to quickly and easily change the location of an item. Errors are logged into a report that can be accessed by the Coordinator for later clean-up by Technical Services staff. The move went extremely well, but of course there will still be errors in the records. Instead of living with them as we have in the past, the Library has embarked on a data clean-up project in preparation for yet another move to a permanent storage facility on campus that will be constructed by 2015.

Benefits
The collection moves for Woodward Library has had some positive outcomes. By moving out more materials than we took in, we were able to create additional study space to accommodate the increase in the number of students who we now serve, as well as to create room for growth in the collection. We were able to retain a logical call number split between floors so that the second floor houses the science and engineering collections, and the third floor is mainly health-related. Journal runs that were split between Hamber and St. Paul’s Hospital libraries and Woodward Library have been reunited. The Current Journals section where unbound journals had been arranged alphabetically by title was re-organized by call number. Despite the transition to online journals in recent years, we still have approximately 400 print journal subscriptions, so we are pleased that the titles are now organized by subject and parallel the arrangement of their bound counterparts in the stacks. During every collection move, staff de-duplicated low use monographs. In the case of the hospital collections, these books can be quite recent, and we offered them first to students on a “book sale” truck that raises a small amount of funds for Woodward Library. The majority of books were discarded, a difficult task for librarians and staff but one that has been made easier now that the Library has an arrangement with Better World Books (BWB). BWB is a program in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom that accepts and sells used books. BWB pays shipping costs, and gives a small percentage to the UBC Library and to a literacy program.

Challenges
Despite the successes, it was a challenging year. Although we were forewarned that the two hospital libraries might close, when a final decision was made, the news still came as a shock and was quite difficult on staff, a few of whom had worked there for many years. The actual move of the hospital library collections went smoothly. Librarians and staff at the two locations had prepared in advance by weeding the collection, sending older monographs to the ASRS, and preparing unbound journals for binding, which were then pushed through by Technical Services. It was a short timeline but the CMP Librarian and Coordinator had factored it into the planning. Outside movers were hired, and it all happened within three weeks of the announcement. We were fortunate to have swing space on the main floor of Woodward Library, so both hospital library collections were moved there, and we could decide on the final destination and de-duplicate materials during the summer and fall. While most of the collection remained at Woodward, some very current items were transferred to the Biomedical Branch Library at Vancouver General Hospital, the remaining off-campus hospital library.
Integration of the People

This paper has focused on the integration of collections but of course library closures and consolidations mean that people are moving too. My former boss (who was Acting Head of Woodward Library) and my new boss (who was Head of Science & Engineering and now Acting Head of Woodward Library) worked hard on the integration of the librarians and staff, and the work that we do. We had an initial meeting of just the librarians where we made a long list of our client groups, which enabled us to focus on the users and clearly see areas of overlap. I was always aware that we shared interdisciplinary areas such as biomedical engineering or oceanography but recently I've encountered new examples such as wood science and drug delivery. Coming out of the first meeting, we established three working groups of librarians and staff, each one focused on a different area: public services, teaching & learning, and collections. These groups made recommendations on how best to integrate our practices, and presented these recommendations at a one-day facilitated meeting where we created a roadmap and timeline to achieve our goals. For example, the collections group recommended merging funds and creating a three-person collections management team with each person taking a lead on a resource type (monographs, serials, databases) versus dividing the pie by discipline, which would not be an integrated approach.

Since the Science & Engineering librarians moved into Woodward in December 2012 and the hospital librarians in April 2013, colleagues from different branches have had opportunities to work together. The approach we took for collections management is working extremely well; we each bring a depth of experience to the team, and although we have defined roles, we can back each other up if one person is away. We have juggled a few liaison areas; for example, I have taken wood science back under the fold of forestry, and my colleague who liaises with civil engineering has taken on public health, two areas that often overlap. We have a small team of Student Librarians who are now jointly managed by a Woodward librarian and the librarian who was formerly at Hamber Library. Next term I will be co-teaching a library school course with the liaison librarian for mathematics, computer science and engineering. Although we planned this a couple of years ago, it is easier to prepare for the course now that we are in the same building. Finally, this same librarian has teamed up with the pharmacy librarian to participate in the organization of the first western Canadian science boot camp. Some of us already had established working relationships with our colleagues in other branches, but since we are now together in one space, it is easier to combine forces to deliver better library services to our users.
Part Two. The Library, University of California, San Diego
Amy Butros

Introduction
In 2012, the University of California, San Diego consolidated the Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library into the Geisel Library and the Science & Engineering Library. Scripps Library was the fourth library to be consolidated/closed in 2011-2012. In summer 2013 the last four branch and discipline libraries of the original nine were consolidated, leaving only one library in two buildings. A complete restructuring of the Library’s departments and programs was implemented in 2012-2013, resulting in a new organizational structure, consolidated collections and services, and different jobs and reporting lines for most staff.

Background
I began working at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library in 2003 as their new Instruction & Outreach coordinator. At that time I had no idea that this library, one of the oldest and largest oceanographic libraries in the world, would close before I retired.

In 2003, and up through 2011, the UC San Diego Library system had 9 libraries:
- The Geisel Library Building housed:
  - Arts & Architecture Library
  - Social Sciences & Humanities Library
  - Science & Engineering Library
  - Mandeville Special Collections
- Biomedical Library
- Medical Center Library
- CLICS (infocommons & undergraduate library)
- International Relations & Pacific Studies Library
- Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library

The first branch library to close was the Medical Center Library in spring 2011, then the CLICS “infocommons” and the International Relations & Pacific Studies Library closed in summer 2011. In June 2012, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library (founded in 1912) closed, and the rest of the discipline based branch libraries were all consolidated into “The Library” by summer 2013.

Preceding the closures and consolidations were many Town Hall meetings with detailed explanations of our budget situation during which we were told of the closure plans and the timeline for the closures. What helped staff morale was administration’s promise that layoffs would be avoided, and building closures and consolidations were necessary to keep jobs and collections from being impacted too severely.

The anticipated additional cut of $3-$6 million to the Library’s budget solidified the closure plans. Library administration and planning teams conducted several retreats, planning sessions, and focus groups, resulting in the Library’s reorganization taking shape.

Current Situation
My current job allows me to work as an “Embedded Librarian,” working several days a week out of an office that is located in a Scripps Institution of Oceanography building, not a Library building. This is a great advantage because I am available onsite to the Scripps community for instruction, consultations,
and reference. Faculty and graduate students do drop in to consult with me, which is more convenient for them than traveling around 2 miles to visit our Library on the main campus. My Scripps office is in the Scripps Administration Building, very close to the Scripps space that is used for book pickup & drop off, print course reserves, and graduate student study/collaboration space, which is very convenient if the graduate students have any questions or need help with collection paging, etc. To plan and implement the remote services of collection paging, course reserves, and location furnishing, I worked closely over a period of several months with the Scripps Graduate Office Manager and key Scripps administrative staff, and then I presented proposals to Library administration for approval of these remote services, which were implemented in July 2012.

![Figure 5. Embedded librarian office in Scripps Administration Building.](image)

**Collection Consolidation**
Moving the massive Scripps collection, close to 164,000 items, took a little over one year to accomplish. We needed to vacate the first two floors of the former library building so Scripps departments could renovate and occupy the vacated space. My first weeding project at the start of the Scripps collection moves was the reference collection. I selected fewer than 1/3rd of the reference titles for the move to the Science & Engineering reference collection (now integrated into a general reference collection in the Geisel Library); these were mainly items for undergraduate use. Titles that would be of more interest to Scripps researchers and graduate students I transferred to the circulating collection so that they could be paged down to Scripps when requested. In addition, print copies of online reference titles (encyclopedias and handbooks) were removed to the circulating collection. By summer 2013, a year after the library closed, the books and journals’ move to compact shelving in the Geisel Library building was completed. I am now involved in weeding projects for Scripps media titles (old CD ROMs), and special collection titles, with more weeding projects planned for the coming year.
Staff Reassignments and Reporting Lines
We were very fortunate that our Library administrators did not initiate any librarian or staff layoffs. Staffing levels were carefully planned and communicated to staff at the initial restructuring planning stages, a fact that helped improve morale considerably. After retirements and staff attrition, there were enough positions for all the remaining staff after the library closures and consolidations.

The campus budget is looking better now, and hopefully savings from closures and consolidations will help us in the future. We have been able to start some recruiting for vacancies and new positions.

Our new structure is now promoted as One Library in four locations: two library buildings, Geisel Library Building and Biomedical Library Building; a storage Annex five miles east of campus; and the one floor left from the Scripps Library building known as the “Scripps Archives and Special Collections Annex,” where unique collections such as the institution’s historical archives and some atlases and expedition reports are housed. In this new structure we have three Associate University Librarians (AULs) supporting our University Librarian, when we previously had five. Each AUL has several programs reporting to them, with new “Program Directors” managing each area. Many of these program directors were hired after internal recruitment, and they are managing new, and renamed, areas such as Academic Liaison Program, Learning Services, Learning Spaces, Digital User Services, Reference & Research Advisory Services, Collection Development & Management, Digital Library Development, Metadata Services, Research Data Curation, Information Technology Services, Internal Communication, etc.

This new structure is very complex, and in many cases one person can be in three or more programs. To assist with management and reporting lines it was decided that each librarian and staff member have one “home” program, the program where they have been assigned at 50% or more. So, for example, a
librarian could be assigned 60% in the Academic Liaison Program, 25% in Collection Development & Management, and 15% in Reference & Research Advisory Services.

Challenges
Initially adapting and “thriving” was simpler in summer 2012, when only a few libraries closed and the remaining libraries absorbed the staff and collections. In that year, the collections and services from the initial four libraries that closed were consolidated into the remaining libraries. This was accomplished with key staff from each library leading “closure projects” and monitoring collections, staff moves, equipment, furniture, etc., and then the relocated staff took on similar duties in the remaining library branches.

For example, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography liaison librarian, responsible for instruction, outreach, and reference, continued these duties for Scripps patrons while based in the Science & Engineering Library. In summer 2013, the closure of all discipline based libraries created bigger challenges, with the total restructuring of staff jobs and the creation of new “programs,” reporting lines, and service models. The plans and new structure, conceived, vetted, and streamlined over a period of almost three years, was put in place by the end of summer 2013. It was mainly in July and August 2013 that the Library’s new program structure, librarian and staff re-assignments, and reporting lines were finalized. Most recently, in fall 2013, is when all physical moves are being implemented and they should be completed by the end of the year.

It has been a major challenge to maintain our level of service in some “standard” areas such as reference, instruction, circulation, Interlibrary loan, collection development & management, etc. while staff are being moved, trained, or taking on more/new roles due to consolidated jobs or long term vacancies. It is true that our previous practice of not having any new hires for three years brought about major salary savings, but the added workload created additional stress on the remaining staff. With the new structure we have many librarians and library staff in more than one “program,” some are in three or four different program areas and they will need time to adjust to this new structure and their new reporting lines, and to figure out the process for support systems (e.g. access to administrative assistants, technical support, and student employee help).

Are We Thriving?
It is too soon to tell if our staff, programs and new structure are really “thriving” since we just started implementation in summer 2013 and our Library administration is allowing us one year of “shake out” time. After the year is over we can evaluate, revisit, and rework any areas or programs that appear to need it.

What is going to be difficult for us is to learn how to work and coordinate our areas of overlap; for example, librarians whose home program is in collection development but who are the subject specialists for their topic and are called upon to do instruction and reference by other programs they do not report to. How can we evaluate these programs, services and people, with so much overlap and with different “percentages” for people in each program?

At this point, some of our staff see these new areas as exciting new opportunities for growth, development, and learning new areas to be able to offer new services, such as the chance to be closer to our users by offering office hours and reference/instruction opportunities in their departments. There are also opportunities to explore new service models and ways to use and implement new technologies,
especially in the arena of online instruction. So I remain optimistic, very tired after all the changes and office moves, but hopeful of what the future may bring.

Maureen Nolan

Introduction
In 2009 the University of Washington consolidated three science branch libraries (Natural Sciences, Fisheries-Oceanology and Chemistry) into the main (Suzzallo/Allen) library and adopted a new “reading room” service model for the Physics/Astronomy Library. As part of the consolidation UW developed a new “Research Commons” in the real estate that was the Natural Sciences Library.

Background
I officially began my position as the Natural Sciences and Resources Librarian with the University of Washington Libraries in 1997. At that time there were 22 libraries on three campuses. My original position was designed so that I worked regular hours in four of the branch libraries, three located on the Seattle Campus - Natural Sciences, Fisheries Oceanography, Forestry (which I also managed in the summer months) - and Friday Harbor, the library at our marine labs in the San Juan Islands, for which I was also Head of the library. In addition, I also worked occasionally in the Engineering Library where I had held a position as a graduate student.

At the University of Washington Libraries, many of the smaller, departmental libraries had closed over the years, including Geography and Philosophy, but then things were stable for a number of years. In 2004, the decision was made to close Forest Resources Library upon the retirement of the librarian. That library was integrated into the Natural Sciences Library and I was assigned the subject areas of Forest Resources and Environmental Sciences.

Science Branch Library Closures
In 2008, due to a struggling economy, budget cuts, and having moved to mostly online journals, UW Libraries looked again at branch closures. All of the proposed closures were science libraries. The rationale was that the sciences were heavy users of journals which were now mostly available online. Libraries Administration also was eager to develop a “Research Commons” to be focused on graduate students of all disciplines, and the first choice of real estate was the ground floor of Allen Library South, the main floor of the Natural Sciences Library.

I served on a committee for a year that looked at multiple options, including making Allen Library South a “sciences tower” with the ground floor of the new sciences library acting as the “research commons.” That idea never gained traction, and the decision was announced to close Natural Sciences, Fisheries-Oceanography, Chemistry, and Physics. Later that year, the Social Work Library was also closed.

Challenges
Of the librarians working in these libraries, one was in a temporary position that was not renewed, one moved to the Engineering Library, and five went to Suzzallo/Allen Library. The staff members were relocated to other Seattle campus libraries and were given a say in where they were assigned.
Surprisingly (to the science librarians, anyway), there was little resistance to the idea of closures from the affected departments and faculty. Since the Natural Sciences Library was physically located within the larger Suzzallo-Allen Library it was not called a closure, but a “merger.” It is possible that members of many of the natural sciences subject departments were distracted by the merger of their Colleges and Schools into the new College of the Environment. The Physics-Astronomy Library was the lone exception.

The Physics Department had major objections to the proposed closure of their library and waged a battle to keep it open. The end result was financial support from the department and a new MOU regarding the library that turned it into the “Physics Reading Room.” The collections were left in place, but there would be no regular librarian and the library would be “lightly staffed” mostly by iSchool graduate students. The Physics Librarian ended up splitting her time between the Physics Library and the Engineering Library.

The physical move took place during the summer of 2009 and was an enormous challenge. The entire contents of three libraries were moved into the Suzzallo/Allen Libraries stacks, and the entire run of the Suzzallo/Allen Libraries, including journals, was put into a single A-Z call number run. In total, this required that over four million physical volumes be moved, including 670,000 books moved to or from the off-site Sand Point Shelving Facility.

**Benefits**

There have been many positive outcomes from moving the branches into the main library. There has been a high degree of increased cooperation, especially between librarians representing different disciplines and subject areas. For example, we put on a full day of seminars, presentations, and lightning talks in cooperation with the Department of Communication, College of the Environment and the Graduate School called SEAchange. It brought together faculty, students, and outside speakers to talk about how communication patterns were different after the Exxon Valdez and Deepwater Horizon disasters. See: [http://guides.lib.washington.edu/SEAchange](http://guides.lib.washington.edu/SEAchange).

Another benefit was new and improved user spaces. What had been the first floor of the Natural Sciences Library became the Research Commons. It was completely redone with new furniture, carpeting, technology, and brightly colored walls. It was built using small capital money and a one-time gift from the Provost.
Figure 7. UW Libraries Research Commons.

The Research Commons is extremely popular and highly used. Students love the whiteboard walls and the multi-purpose areas. We also added technology including Media:Scape stations so students can work collaboratively.

Figure 8. Whiteboard walls.  Figure 9. Media:Scape station.

We also included a large space that can be used for classes or presentations. Presentation Place is modular so that it can be reconfigured for use by both large and small groups.
In addition, in the midst of budget cuts to the whole institution, there were no staff layoffs due to branch closures and mergers. In Suzzallo Library, positive changes also included additional space realized for collection growth, the call numbers were moved into a single A-Z run, and journals and books were interfiled. We have gotten a lot of positive feedback from users regarding the improvements to usability of the collection due to these changes.

So how did the staff feel about the changes after the dust settled and we were in our new positions? We were still feeling a little shell-shocked. The downturn in the economy after 2008 also led to a feeling of constant low level stress. Too many years without a raise, too many things added to everyone’s plates, and just a constant level of stress led the Libraries’ HR to institute a “Wellness Program.”

It started with a pilot program of once-per-week yoga. It was so successful that it is now an ongoing class, and a walking program of lunchtime strolls around the campus was started. We even had a visit from therapy dogs!

So, how are we feeling now after four years? We’re feeling very, very good. The moral of this story is...change is stressful and anything worth building takes time. And, on a personal note, one of the best outcomes for me is that I get to work in one of the most beautiful libraries in the world, Suzzallo Library!
References (Entire Panel)