Director, MIT Libraries

Ad Hoc Task Force on the Future of Libraries

In October 2015, MIT Provost Martin A. Schmidt asked Chris Bourg, director of Libraries, to convene and lead an Ad Hoc Task Force on the Future of Libraries. The Task Force was charged with seeking broad input from the MIT community and from domain experts on how the MIT Libraries ought to evolve to best advance the creation, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge—and to serve as a leader in the reinvention of research libraries. Members of the Task Force included faculty from all five schools, staff from the Libraries, IS&T, ODL, and the MIT Press, as well as graduate and undergraduate students.

The Task Force gathered input through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms, including several open forums designed to elicit ideas from MIT faculty, students, and staff on their visions for the future of research libraries. The Task Force website also included an Idea Bank, where members of the MIT community could submit their ideas about the future of libraries and comment on the ideas of others.

From all of this input and extensive discussion, the Task Force developed a bold new vision for libraries and a set of recommendations detailed in a report to be released for public comment this fall. The vision and recommendations developed by the Task Force are grounded in the principle that libraries should facilitate abundant, equitable, meaningful, and durable access to knowledge and to the products of the full life cycle of research. The overarching theme of the Task Force's new vision is that the MIT Libraries must be a global library for a global university. To enable that vision, the MIT Libraries must:

1. Establish an open platform that serves MIT's global audience of knowledge creators, seekers, and curators
2. Become a center for rigorous interdisciplinary research and development in information sciences and scholarly communication
3. Prioritize the open discovery, access, and use of research and teaching objects
4. Reimagine and reinvigorate core library functions and values related to the roles of library spaces, library education, and the role of libraries in promoting diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

The Task Force envisions the MIT Libraries as an open, trusted, durable, interdisciplinary, interoperable content platform providing a foundation for the entire lifecycle of information for collaborative global research and education. Under this vision, the library shifts from seeing itself (and being seen) as a local treasure for the MIT community to being a leader in the collaborative development of a global network of open repositories.

As the Task Force worked to develop this vision, the MIT Libraries continued to provide exceptional services, expertise, and resources to the communities we serve. The work described in this report reflects our dual emphases this year on building capacity to prepare our organization to enact the recommendations of the Task Force and experimenting with and assessing the kinds of innovative services that will move us toward the vision developed by the Task Force.

Academic Support

Library services in support of MIT's dynamic research and learning mission continue to evolve in alignment with the needs of departments, labs, and centers and in collaboration with campus partners.

Significant expansion of academic services was noted in several areas:
- The Aga Khan Documentation Center raised its profile by serving as an expert resource for preserving at-risk cultural heritage in the Middle East with UNESCO.
- New staff roles were created to support innovation and entrepreneurship, teaching and learning, digital scholarship, Geographic Information Systems, and research data management.
- The Data Management Planning Tool (DMPTool) was implemented; the Libraries collaborated with MIT IS&T on the release of LabArchives; with library support, Open Researcher and Contributor IDs (ORCIDs) were deployed throughout the campus.
- The Libraries upgraded self-service scanners, printers, and microform equipment.
- The Libraries expanded office delivery of library materials to more campus-based user groups and enhanced the popular "scan and deliver" option to include on-campus collections.

The capacity for new initiatives was created by improving efficiencies in two traditional functions:
- The Libraries simplified borrowing options from regional partners by streamlining MIT's resource sharing partnerships and concentrating on developing services through IviesPlus partners.
- Staff reviewed on-site collections and initiated a major storage initiative to create collections space for future growth and rearrangement.

The Libraries explored the needs of the academic community in several areas: research data management infrastructure, visualization, and digital maker spaces. The Libraries also initiated proposals to increase user self-service for holds and reserves, create an active learning classroom in Barker Library, and use drones for the collection of GIS data.

Collections

Greg Eow, newly appointed associate director for Collections, began in August 2015 and led a realignment of the Collections directorate that realizes efficiencies in both staffing and workflows and collectively repositions the MIT Libraries to continue its global leadership role in scholarly communications and open access initiatives. These changes represent a strategic pivot to invest increasingly in the Libraries' ability to collect, preserve, and disseminate MIT's research and knowledge output for a global audience.

Noteworthy developments in the collections realm:

- A new focus on developing negotiation skills resulted in the formation of a cross-functional Negotiations Team to lead the Libraries' annual negotiations with major electronic journals vendors. By providing formal negotiations training opportunities for team members, and by

developing a team-based approach to annual negotiations, the Libraries will be better positioned to make headway in our efforts to contain rapidly rising costs in serials subscriptions.

- An experimental fund to spur innovation and creativity in library collections was used to purchase a web archiving platform (Archive-It!), to acquire a streaming video service (Kanopy), and to launch a study of patron preferences for digital versus print music scores in the Lewis Music Library.
- To promote student engagement with rare books, a $50,000 acquisition fund was established in the Institute Archives and Special Collections. All of the first-year acquisitions made through this fund—including a Mesopotamian clay tablet—have been incorporated into MIT classes, giving students a hands-on engagement opportunity with the cultural record.
- The Open Access Articles collection added more than 3,000 articles, representing a 19% increase over FY15 article deposits and bringing the total number of OA articles in the collection to more than 20,000.
- The Libraries continue to play a substantial leadership role in digital preservation, as the global library and archives communities search for technology and business models to support sustainable long-term access to the digital record. A comprehensive digital preservation storage plan was completed over the past year that, when implemented, will establish a fully-supported foundation for the long-term management of our digital collections.

Technology

Following an internal study completed in FY2015, an external team of library technologists visited campus in September 2015 and, as in the internal study, recommended substantial additional investment in library technology and technology staff. Strategic technology priorities emerged and are now a focus, including the following:

- Replace Integrated Library System (ILS) with a next generation community-source Library Services Platform (LSP).
- Develop a multi-platform digital repository infrastructure to allow broader and more rapid expansion of digital collections and associated services.
- Develop a transparent IT governance process (project proposal, prioritization, and approval) to align project investments with the MIT Libraries strategies, priorities, and resources (implemented in early 2016).

Notable technology initiatives included the following:

- Overhauled suite of GIS services with content management for both GIS files and metadata and automated workflows to support them.
- Partnered with IS&T to transition Libraries' web content and functionality to an improved MIT mobile application platform, to host and manage the Libraries' storage and computing hardware, to host high-availability library systems, and to increase our reliance on MIT's Distributed IT Resources (DITR) team for ongoing desktop support and for special projects.
- Developed solutions that enhance the quality and discoverability of, as well as access, to the Libraries' digital collections, particularly Open Access materials and eBooks.
- Deployed/deploying important new digital tools:

- o Symplectic Elements to replace a locally developed Open Access bibliographic data store and associated workflow support tools.
- o Archivematica, a preservation system designed to provide workflow support to the life cycle management of digital content.
- o ArchiveSpace to manage Institute Archives content and operations.
- o Launched an exploration of the Yewno search tool, which provides a graphical display of connections between nodes of information, potentially allowing for new forms of discovery and knowledge creation.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Well-Being

The Libraries' priorities in these areas over the past year were evident in several noteworthy ways:
- The Committee for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion (CPDI) continued its high level of activities, sponsoring more than a dozen different events with hundreds of attendees over the course of the year, and introducing a weekly news digest for library staff. CPDI members also played important roles in MIT-wide events and activities.
- A Code of Conduct was adopted to demonstrate the Libraries' commitment to an inclusive, collaborative, caring, and respectful community environment. The code is specifically intended to help ensure that all events sponsored by the Libraries provide supportive and respectful experiences for all attendees.
- The topic of diversity and inclusion was actively discussed at a variety of library staff forums throughout the year, including in connection with the review of our search process for administrative staff and also as a performance factor. The overall portion of underrepresented minority staff rose from 14% to 15%, which falls short of the Libraries' aspirations while comparing favorably with other ARL libraries in the New England region, which average 9%.
- The Libraries developed and promulgated a statement on diversity and inclusion:

  The MIT Libraries is committed to supporting diversity, inclusion, and well-being within the communities we represent and serve. To that end, the Libraries seek to:
  - *Promote and enhance the well-being of all our community members—especially students—by maintaining inclusive, safe, and welcoming spaces and by providing resources, services, and programs that promote and reflect diversity, inclusion, social justice, and wellness.*
  - *Increase the percentage of underrepresented minority (URM) staff in the Libraries.*
  - *Provide ongoing training and support for all library staff in developing cultural competencies.*
  - *Maintain strong relationships within the MIT community, especially with URM groups and programs, supporting their goals and valuing their opinions.*
  - *Be a leader within the library and archives professional communities to advocate for broader adoption and implementation of these goals.*

Resource Development

Fiscal Year 2016 was the Libraries' first full year under the leadership of Director Chris Bourg, marked by enthusiasm for innovative ideas, a willingness to engage frequently with past and prospective donors, and a desire to collaborate with colleagues in central Resource Development and the Alumni

Association. Thanks in part to a large gift from an anonymous donor, the Libraries recorded a remarkable increase in annual gift revenue for FY16 over FY15, up by nearly 200% to a total of just under $1 million. The fundraising team will be augmented in FY17 by the addition of a Grants Development Officer. The goal of this new position will be to focus more attention on Libraries and MIT Press efforts in the sphere of foundation and sponsored activities.

Sponsored Research

The Libraries' Program on Information Science, led by Director of Research Micah Altman, was active in a number of areas: Data Management and Privacy (Sloan Foundation, U.S. Census Bureau, Microsoft Research, and Harvard University); Data Transparency, Collection, Participation, and Reproducibility (Harvard Berkman Center for the Internet and Society, Microsoft, and the Berkeley Center for Law and Technology); Enhancing Teaching and Learning (National Science Foundation, the Technical Education Research Center, and Landmark College); and hosting a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Software Curation (Council on Library and Information Resources).

Two other staff members also led sponsored research projects. Nancy McGovern (Program Manager, Digital Preservation) was active in several continuing digital preservation projects sponsored by the National Science Foundation/University of Minnesota, the Institute for Museum and Library Services and the Council on Library and Information Resources (IMLS), IMLS and Harvard University, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Jana Dambrogio (Thomas F. Peterson ('57) Conservator) was awarded grants from three sponsors in support of her research into letterlocking: the Delmas Foundation, the Seaver Institute, and the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands).

Administrative

- Community Support and Staff Development: This was the first year of a new position focused on outreach to many campus partners in support of a variety of student and community wellness programs, as well as the creation of a structured staff development program.
- Human Resources completed a major review and update of the Libraries' administrative staff search process.
- Marketing and Communications: New staff were hired into both positions; the Libraries' suite of marketing materials was redesigned; and a study of internal communications practices and preferences was conducted.
- Financial: The business model for the Libraries' resource sharing and digital scanning operations migrated from cost-recovery to standard budgeted operations at the end of FY16. Although this change had been considered for several years due to the operational advantages it afforded, it was implemented only after analysis revealed a negligible fiscal impact.

Chris Bourg
Director of Libraries