

Director, MIT Libraries

The MIT Libraries adopted a new three year strategic plan in November to respond creatively and effectively to the dynamic and challenging landscape of higher education and scholarly communication. The plan, firmly embedded in MIT's mission and aligned with MIT's priorities, aspires to this vision:

Guided by a user-centered approach that values diversity and inclusion, the Libraries:

- Enable seamless discovery and access to scholarly information sources.
- Provide the MIT community with expert support and training to find, evaluate, manage, and use information resources.
- Create high-quality spaces for both reflective and collaborative work and study.
- Manage and preserve knowledge, with an emphasis on MIT-created content.
- Lead initiatives to inform and shape the future of libraries and scholarly research.

Foundational to the strategy are guiding principles for planning and action across the Libraries:

- Partner with faculty to advance the Libraries' mission.
- Collaborate across MIT and beyond to evolve services and collections.
- Use data-driven assessment to inform decision-making.
- Develop and maintain a diverse, skilled, and engaged workforce dedicated to an inclusive MIT community.
- Foster a spirit of innovation.
- Advocate for sound information policy.
- Leverage fundraising to strengthen library programs.

Five articulated priorities are the plan's focus:

- Advance Digital Scholarship and Research
- Expand Investments in Digital Content Management Infrastructure and Services
- Participate Actively in Digital Learning at MIT
- Enhance the On-Campus Experience through Transformed Library Services and Spaces
- Strengthen Support for MIT's Global engagement

After the plan was finalized last fall, the Libraries' senior leadership team, Library Council (LC), developed an ambitious but realistic plan of action. During its annual retreat in January LC reviewed an inventory of work currently underway and a host of possible new initiatives that emerged from library staff. This resulted in a prioritized set of projects, assuring that adequate resources can be marshalled for support.

Open Access

The Libraries' support of MIT's faculty open access (OA) policy continues to be a high priority. Significant milestones were reached this year with over 12,000 papers now freely available online in the DSpace OA collection, and over 2,000,000 downloads since the OA collection went live in October 2009. These successes are the result of exemplary efforts by a wide ranging team of staff working directly with faculty and cooperating publishers to devise workflows that are guided by MIT's OA policy that states "... develop and monitor a plan for a service or mechanism that would render compliance with the policy as convenient for the faculty as possible." Efforts this past year focused on the development of an open access permissions engine to streamline staff workflows, collaboration with key publishers on testing automated deposits, and creating a web-based statistics system allowing authors to get timely information on usage of their papers. This new system is expected to be in production later this summer.

The Director of Libraries also led significant discussions about MIT's position on the Open Access Policy at Academic Council, the Faculty Policy Committee, and the Faculty Committee on the Library System. These discussions were initiated in response to the Report to the President: MIT and the Prosecution of Aaron Swartz. President Reif asked the Director to draft a response to one of the questions raised in the report – should MIT strengthen its activities in support of open access to scholarly publications? The response recommended that there are a number of areas where MIT can do more, but the first action to undertake is a review of the governance model for the faculty open access policy. This coincides with the fifth year anniversary of the policy, which includes an embedded five-year review requirement. The Provost and Chair of the Faculty intend to appoint a faculty working group to undertake this review in the fall.

Digital Scholarship and Research

The Libraries were active on a number of national and international fronts in advancing digital scholarship and research. The Libraries' Director of Research serves on the executive board of ORCID, an international collaboration to develop a standard for researcher identifiers, and is spearheading the library team working with the Provost's Office of Institutional Research to develop an approach for MIT to adopt this important initiative. Other efforts included working on a CODATA/ICTSI/BRDI task group on data citation standards, and participating in the OCLC working group on integrating author and research identification. In January, the new, visually-rich Archnet 2.0 site was launched, after several years of highly collaborative work among the Aga Khan Documentation Center, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and the MIT Libraries. Archnet aspires to be the authority in the field of architecture and the built environment in Muslim societies by providing an unparalleled resource featuring vetted and refereed articles, images, data and research. It is well on its way to achieving this vision.

Support for Compliance Requirements

Liaisons for Departments, Laboratories, and Centers provided increased support for NIH compliance outreach in collaboration with the Office of Scholarly Publishing, Licensing & Copyright. NIH compliance overview sessions for administrators and faculty have been given for Biology, Biological Engineering, Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Chemistry, and the Whitehead Institute. Additional NIH compliance workshops for researchers were also offered and well received. The Libraries also expanded the scope of its Cite-Help group from supporting citation management tools to providing services and support for individuals and small groups on the use of tools and strategies that facilitate the organization, sharing, and citation of their scholarly content. This expansion in scope reflects an increasing need by the MIT community to manage their content (pdfs, notes, images, etc.) in addition to simply managing their citations. This coincided with initiating an institutional subscription to Mendeley, a powerful digital research tool for managing, annotating, and sharing PDFs.

Digital Content Management Infrastructure

Investments in digital content management infrastructure continued this past year. In December a team was formed to assess the ArchivesSpace archival management tool, and plan for the migration from Archivists' Toolkit. The assessment, which is well underway and expected to be completed in the fall, will set the stage for future implementation and transition to a new production system. A new Digital Sustainability Laboratory was planned and built in the basement of Hayden Library adjacent to the Wunsch Conservation Laboratory, and is being launched this summer. The lab was established with donor-funding and will focus on testing, evaluating, and implementing software and hardware tools for experiments in the management and preservation of born-digital materials. Work by the Libraries' life cycle group advanced, setting the groundwork for creating efficient workflows and developing tools for several specific content types in the coming year. In April, the Scanning Lab, formerly a part of Information Delivery & Library Access, joined Collections Preservation and Reformatting to create a more logical and synergistic alignment of activities in support of managing and preserving collections.

Digital Learning

The potential of digital learning remained an area of great interest and activity across MIT, the Libraries, and internationally, as the worldwide discussion about the future of MOOCs continued. The Libraries took a leadership role within the edX Consortium, working with edX to establish an edX library committee to assist all consortium participants in developing and understanding emergent practices around such important areas as provisioning third-party copyrighted material within the structure of MOOC, embedding appropriated research skills within courses, and preserving the enormous amounts of content and research data that MOOCs generate. On the MIT campus the focus was on partnering with the Office of Digital Learning (ODL) on several initiatives:

- Working with ODL and the company VitalSource, with whom edX has contracted to arrange license agreements for textbooks for classes, to assist with workflows and access to published works, including consulting on edX / Vital Source launch documents for course teams.
- Educating ODL on the relevance and utility of the MIT Faculty Open Access Policy to their work.
- Providing support to MITx course teams regarding fair use, and contributing to rights-related discussions and decisions for MITx courses.
- Launching a pilot with ODL, providing publisher contact and negotiation support for books needed for MITx summer and fall courses.

Liaisons also collaborated with faculty teaching a popular edX course, 3.086x: Innovation and Commercialization, creating several content learning modules in support of specific learning skills required for successful navigation of the course. Another collaboration with the Writing Across the Curriculum program, resulted in receipt of a d'Arbeloff Grant for Excellence in Education that focuses on developing online communication instruction for engineering students. The Libraries' new E-Learning and Instructional Services Librarian will be working with the project team to create instructional modules on the MITx platform.

Space Planning

A major milestone in library space planning was achieved with the launch of phase two of the framework for space planning. Building on the 2012 report developed by Shepley Bulfinch and the 2013-14 Rapid Response Feasibility Study of Building 14 completed by EYP, Inc., a request for proposal was issued to create conceptual and schematic designs for a series of phased renovations that will respond to both program and capital renewal needs within Hayden Library. In addition, phase two will provide conceptual designs for targeted renovations to the upper floors of Barker Library and improvements in Rotch Library. The overarching goal is to firmly align library space renewal efforts with MIT's initiatives on the future of education and innovation. After a competitive bidding process Shepley Bulfinch and Van der Weil Engineering were selected in late spring to carry out the work. Planning efforts have already begun with the expectation that several design options will be presented in the fall, and initial renovation work in Hayden could begin as soon as next summer. The recently renovated and restored Barker Reading Room under the dome spurred a 40% increase in the occupancy of Barker, demonstrating the positive reception from students of improving the quality of library spaces.

Service Improvements

The Libraries explored and implemented a number of service improvements to go along with the expanded scope of the Cite Help group mentioned earlier. Of greatest impact was the adoption of a new circulation policy that made access and retention of the libraries tangible general collections easier and more convenient for faculty, students, and staff. With the enthusiastic approval of the Faculty Committee on the Library System, the loan period for non-reserve books was standardized to sixty days with up to five renewals. And the Libraries will automatically renew the book for the community member as long as no other user has requested the item. This simplifies the user experience and saves

time for everyone. Reference services were also upgraded with the implementation of chat reference and expedited online referral processes. A major project to improve the usability, visual appeal, and mobile accessibility of the web site's homepage and news site was launched last fall. We anticipate a go-live date for the new homepage this August, with the News site launching in October. We also expanded our experiment with demand driven acquisition (DDA) for ebooks this past year, and are closely analyzing the results to determine next steps.

Instruction and Outreach

Instruction and outreach activities continued in a robust manner. An 11% increase in the overall attendance of instructional sessions was achieved, with new collaborations developed in courses across the Schools of Engineering, Management, and Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. The Lewis Music Library hosted a series of composer forums along with a number of other popular lectures and concerts. The Maihaugen Gallery featured two successful exhibits – Noteworthy Connections: Music@MIT and Thanks for the Memory: Computing@MIT – that drew over 1,800 visitors. The Libraries stepped up social media efforts this year, and engaged a larger audience by increasing the frequency of postings, exploring alternative incentives, and testing Facebook advertising. The result was a significant boost in followers on both Twitter and Facebook. Twitter followers have grown to nearly 10,000 and Facebook to 4,500. Our increased social media presence has led to more direct interactions with MIT students, faculty, and departments as well as library peers.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Recruitment

Advancing the Libraries' program requires the recruitment, retention, and development of a world-class staff that reflects the diversity and excellence of MIT. Nineteen new appointments were made this past year, 16% from underrepresented minority groups. This puts the overall percentage of underrepresented minorities on the staff at 14%, an all-time high. Recruitment began in May for our second cohort of library fellows. Over 200 applications were received in response to postings for the Library Fellow for Research Data Management and the Library Fellow for Digital Archives. Fellowships in these areas are well-aligned with the Libraries strategic priorities. Fellows are expected to begin their two-year term appointments in the Fall 2014. Following the undertaking of the Association of Research Libraries' Climate Quality Survey last year, the Libraries' Committee for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion (CPDI) sponsored a number of programs and initiatives for library staff to foster a better understanding of behaviors that nurture a positive work environment. CPDI also made a number of actionable recommendations to Library Council in this same spirit, some of which have already been implemented with others under review.

Organizational Changes

Two significant organizational changes occurred this past year to create greater efficiencies and increase the effectiveness of operations. The technology directorate was rebranded and expanded as

Information Technology and Digital Development. It now includes enterprise and discovery systems, user experience and web services, desktop support, IT infrastructure, and digital library application development. In addition, the Acquisitions and Discovery Enhancement Program was incorporated into the Collections Strategy and Management Department.

Leadership Transitions

We would be remiss not to acknowledge the severe challenges faced over the past year due to the untimely death of our Director, Ann Wolpert, and the departure of two Associate Directors, Diane Geraci and Tito Sierra, to pursue other career opportunities. Ann's sudden death was a shock to the entire MIT community and professional colleagues around the world, and her loss is immense. During her eighteen-year tenure at MIT she led the Libraries into an online networked environment, improved library spaces for students, and partnered with faculty to advance MIT's mission of creating impactful knowledge, carefully working to ensure that this knowledge was both accessible and preserved for the future. Coupled with the departure of our two other senior colleagues, the Libraries faced severe challenges to navigate a transition in leadership. Thanks to the tremendous support of MIT's President, Provost, and senior leadership, and the dedication and remarkable efforts of library staff, we can report that the Libraries have responded to the challenge admirably. The Provost initiated a faculty led search for a new library director in February, and they are making great progress in their efforts. A search for the new Associate Director for Information Technology and Digital Development was initiated last summer. We were fortunate to achieve a successful outcome in our efforts with the hire of Armand Doucette, formerly the Executive Director for Technology Services at the Sloan School. Also of note was the promotion of Tracy Gabridge to Associate Director for Research and Instructional Services, taking over a role that was vacated when Steven Gass was asked to be the Interim Director of Libraries. Coming from a background as an MIT alumna and former engineer, Tracy's career over the past fourteen years at MIT has taken her through a steady progression of increasingly responsible roles, directly serving the varied needs of faculty and students.

As a new academic year approaches the Libraries is well positioned to fulfill its mission of creating and sustaining an evolving information environment that advances learning, research, and innovation at MIT, as well as its commitment to excellence in services, strategies, and systems that promote discovery, preserve knowledge, and improve worldwide scholarly communication.

Steve Gass
Interim Director of Libraries