



University of North Texas Libraries

Facilities Report

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Executive summary

Site visit

I was invited by Dean of Libraries Dr. Martin Halbert to conduct a two-day site visit at the University of North Texas Libraries, then file a report consisting of a brief assessment of current facilities, a description of gaps and needs, and recommendations for action in the near-, middle-, and long-term.

The results of the site visit are summarized in this report in three main sections:

- General overview of library facilities;
- A unit by unit summary of staff conversations and observations; and
- Recommendations for future development of library facilities.

The primary recommendation is to begin as soon as possible a master planning process for the University of North Texas Libraries.

A Master Plan for the UNT Libraries

There has been tremendous growth on the UNT campus in the last fifteen years; the UNT Libraries have not kept pace. The UNT Libraries should initiate as soon as possible a master planning process designed to chart the growth of the UNT Libraries over the next five to twenty years.

A Master Plan for the UNT Libraries will consist of:

- A description and current state assessment of the Libraries' buildings and spaces (architecture and engineering), including its utility infrastructure (mechanical, electrical and plumbing);
- An outline of the Libraries' mission, vision and goals, including an account of how they align with the University's vision and mission;

- A program statement describing the Libraries' plans and projections for growth, expansion and transformation of resources and services in response to the changing needs of the University community;
- An analysis of the square foot deficits and gaps between the libraries' projected facility needs and its current state, including utility infrastructure, codes and regulations, and program support;
- A recommended sequence of intervention, renovation and construction to incrementally develop Library facilities to support the needs of the campus and the academic community, and move the Library toward realization of its long-term vision.

Such a planning process can take two to three years to complete and cost between \$300,000 and \$500,000, a significant investment of money and time. But consider that a well-designed Master Plan will serve as a framework to guide Library facility development for many years, and inform the investment of potentially millions of dollars in capital expenditures.

The University of North Texas has declared its ambition to be a tier 1 research institution. It will need a tier 1 library to achieve that goal. The UNT Libraries want to join the campus in realizing its aspirations. A rigorous and active Facilities Master Plan can help the Library achieve its goals.

Introduction

I was invited by Dean of Libraries Dr. Martin Halbert to conduct a two-day site visit at the University of North Texas Libraries, then file a report consisting of a brief assessment of current facilities, a description of gaps and needs, and recommendations for action in the near-, middle-, and long-term. The first day of the visit, Monday, November 30, 2009, was devoted primarily to a tour of five primary facilities of the University of North Texas Libraries (I did not visit the UNT Dallas Library):

- Willis Library, the main library at UNT;
- Media Library in Chilton Hall;
- Science and Technology Library in ISB (Information Science Building);
- Discovery Park Library at Discovery Park;
- Library Annex.

The second day of the visit, Tuesday, December 1, 2009, consisted of a series of meetings with library staff, individually and in groups, from across the library (see Appendix 1). The results of the site visit are summarized below in three main sections:

- General overview of library facilities;
- A unit by unit summary of staff conversations and observations; and
- Recommendations for future development of library facilities.

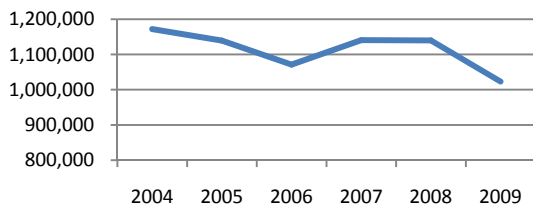
The facilities notes below are impressions formed over two days, and are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to serve as a basis for discussion among library staff, the user community, and the campus administration. Any errors are the author's.

Overview

The Library in the Information Science Building opened in 1937 and was UNT’s main library until 1971. The Willis Library was occupied in 1972 and benefitted from a \$3M renovation in 1995. In 137,000 net assignable square feet (NASF), Willis offers some 1,600 seats; the UNT Libraries contain a total of 218,000 NASF with more than 2,000 seats, offering seating for less than 6% of the student body.

Annual gate count in Willis was about 860,000 in 2008/2009, while total gate count across the UNT Libraries stood at just over 1M. Gate count has been stable or declining for the past five years, perhaps indicating that the libraries have reached carrying capacity.

UNT Libraries total gate count



There are six active service desks on the First Floor of Willis—Image Depot, Reference, Checkout, Circulation, Interlibrary Loan, and Reserves—with desks for microforms, government documents, and music on other floors of the building.

Staff are distributed around the building, fragmenting teams and units, compromising collaboration, and undermining effective communication. Staff spaces are generally crowded and often do not support changing workflows.

There is one major meeting space for library staff (Rm 035), one main conference room (Rm 229), and one

additional small conference room (Rm 352). There is little collaborative work and meeting space for staff, and none for students.

There are no group studies for students.

Many carrels are old and unusable.

Furniture is worn and finishes are monochromatic.

Water damage is a recurring problem, especially on the Lower Level.