

January 30, 2007

To: MALC Executive Board

From: Tim Richards, Chair, Statewide Initiatives Task Force

Subject: Statewide Initiatives Task Force Interim Report

The Statewide Initiatives Task Force met on October 23, 2006 at MLC's offices to discuss and identify key themes and issues that affect libraries in Michigan with the purpose of developing a set of issues that are of sufficient substance that they could form the thematic structure for an all library type conference in Michigan sometime in the next two years..

Our specific mission is to present to MALC key foci for gathering multi-type libraries together to develop strategies to strengthen and sustain Michigan's libraries. The overall theme that we identified is: Building the Future for Michigan's Library Community

At our meeting, we identified the following key themes and issues that fall under this overarching theme:

Operational excellence: delivering cost effective information services to our customers through collaboration and cooperation across library types and breaking down the barriers of traditional geographic and political jurisdictions. Specific topics under this issue may include: cost effectiveness, Mel, digitization; the challenge of change.

Customer satisfaction: ensuring that libraries remain essential to our communities by creating and sustaining innovative information services and tools to meet customer expectations and needs while enhancing our credibility and relevance to our customers. Specific topics under this issue may include: marketing, the image of the library.

Information access and delivery: protecting the availability of information of all types and formats for the use of the citizens of Michigan. Specific topics under this issue may include digitization; Mel; collaboration, cooperation and competition among libraries, intellectual property rights and permissions, distance learning and digital repositories.

Librarianship as a profession: defining new the new roles and education needs for information professional 2010+. Specific topics under this issue may include education and training for librarians and non librarian staff, the image of the library, the challenge of change.

Funding the future: implementing new innovative financial models to support key existing and new tool, programs, services and institutions Specific topics under this issue may include: marketing, the image of the library, Michigan's economy.

Task Force members:

Margaret Auer, University of Detroit Mercy (ex officio MALC Executive Committee)
Elaine Didier, Gerald R. Ford Library and Museum
Tom Gensen, Herrick District Library (Holland)
Diane Hummel, Spectrum Health (Grand Rapids)

Margaret Lincoln, Lakeview School District (Battle Creek)
Victor Liu, Washtenaw Community College (Chair, Michigan Library Consortium Board)
Elaine Logan, Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company
Lisa Palchick, Kalamazoo College
Thomas Moore, Central Michigan University
Josie Parker, Ann Arbor District Library (President, Michigan Library Association)
Tim Richards, University of Michigan-Dearborn (Task Force Chairperson)

The notes from the October 23 meeting are appended below:

Statewide Initiatives Task Force
October 23, 2006 Meeting

Present: Auer, Didier, Gensen, Hummel, Lincoln, Liu, Logan, Moore, Palchick, Parker, Richards

- Identify Important and themes that affect libraries in Michigan; develop a set of issues sufficiently important in state that could lead to all library type conference in Michigan
- Previous conference 1999 – 9 key themes – equitable funding, library staffing levels mandated, speaking with one voice, contribute to economic and well-being to state though information fluency, information technology, community centered libraries, core set of info resources in each library, marketing and pr, improved access for all
- Present to MALC key foci for gathering multi-type libraries together to develop strategies to strengthen and sustain Michigan’s libraries [March 13]
- Key Issues:

Building the Future for Michigan’s Library Community

A. Digital repositories;

- Archiving electronic and “born digital” materials
- Open source materials

B. Marketing the library

- Libraries 2.0
- Market the concept of libraries; what they contribute to society and what they do
- What libraries are and how they are still important
- The public does not differentiate among specific types of libraries
- Marketing/image of libraries – collaboration
- Branding
- Who are our customers? Whom do we serve? Who do we design information for?/new learning styles/design for next generation;
- What services do we offer?
- Need to understand what the business community needs/expects from the library. Need to be clear on what the library’s “job” is -- e.g., is it to “add value” to information that it identifies/provides/retrieves?
- What is our business? Marketing & communicating to our users
- Added value – what business are we in and how are we different from other information providers, ProQuest, Google, Amazon, etc.?
- Customers – listen to, respect

C. Funding for Michigan's libraries and Michigan's economy

- Impact on public institutions
- Development of economic resources
- Information haves and have nots
- The economic and social value of access to information
- Identify/ develop models for funding libraries in Michigan

D. Politics: Image of libraries

- Divide and conquer: develop strategies to overcome the tendency for our libraries to allow themselves to create the opening for libraries to be targets for a “divide and conquer” strategy by politicians. Find a way to encourage libraries to renounce the strategy of protecting funding for individual libraries at the expense of funding for all types of libraries
- The existence of libraries is not a “given” -- we need to develop strategies to justify our existence/explicate what we contribute. We need to develop the library brand/political image
- Speak with one voice – what are those areas where we can speak with one voice successfully right out of the box
- The library community (including members of the academic library community) should be talking to Bill Anderson. He should be told about the value of MeL and how he and the governor will look good for what they have provided to the state residents.
- Work with state legislators – focus on what do we do for them and for their constituents

E. Library science education and training for all staff

- Training our library successors
- Next generation of leadership
- More practical training/experience via practica, internships, etc. in Master's Programs
- Continuing education for those who work in our libraries

F. MeL

- Funding of MeL Databases is unstable; we need to work with HAL and Michigan's political leadership to provide stable funding
- Collaboration among all libraries in the state to maintain and strengthen MeL Internet
- Participating in MeL is there a role for all libraries to take ownership, not just LOM, e.g., collection development specialists contributions from all libraries to build and maintain MeL Internet collections

G. Cost Effectiveness

- Develop strategies and, policies and procedures so that we use resources both efficiently and cost effectively in delivering services to our publics
- Eliminate inefficiencies in delivery of public services, e.g., examine cost effectiveness when an inordinate amount of staff time is consumed to deliver a service
- Job restructuring/rethink what does librarian training need to be – providing practical experiences and training

- Reconfigure libraries to meet needs of users in a cost effective manner

H. The Challenge of Change

- Changing technology
- Changing expectations of users
- Library jobs need to change/be restructured to meet the changing environment
- Changing political and economic environment
- Changing information needs/help people to adjust;
- Provide web access to digitized archival material
- Enhance opportunities for users to “be in charge of” their own unique experience
- Emulate museums by providing users the opportunity to have interactive experiences, not just flat display
- Employ blogs/wiki’s/text messaging, etc. as tools to serve users’ needs

I. Intellectual Property

- Assert fair use rights for libraries and library users
- Online databases –licensing, statewide, multi-type access, archiving

J. Collaboration, Competition and Cooperation

- Seek/develop partnerships with other community information providers: libraries, museums, other cultural institutions/agencies/communities/businesses
- Libraries have a competitive niche in the cultural market place; libraries and museums are in competition with each others for the public’s dollars/time
- Virtual Reference – an opportunity for collaboration among Michigan’s libraries? Is it sustainable?
- Retaining “final copy” of print resources/ archival copies of ejournals
- Off-site storage of print materials and other physical items (e.g., phono records, video tapes) define periods of responsibility; what years are a national responsibility; what are state responsibility?
- Separate “wheat from chaff” – what do we “need” – consolidate where relevant; eliminate duplication/redundancy; larger theme: reconciling ambitions with resources available; make decisions that help local libraries be stronger

K. Distance learning;

- Libraries of different types support distance learners within in our respective (and over-lapping) communities/publics
- Course management systems