

The Library as Catalyst Project

A Framework for Working Groups and Input Solicitation

Background

In the Spring of 2018, the Dean of Libraries embarked on developing a vision and framework for the Main Library and Special Collections. The vision that underlies this effort calls upon the University to develop a new model for research libraries that goes beyond the traditional research library, including the model of the “information commons”. The vision under development as part of *The Library as Catalyst* calls upon Illinois to combine the rich, historical collections of the University Library into a common facility focused on the humanities, arts, social and behavioral sciences. Leveraging our rich collections and strong service program, the resulting operation will serve the humanities and social sciences in the same manner that existing institutes on this campus serve the sciences. Adjacent to a central home for our special collections, the resulting institute will serve as a hub of research and learning in the humanities and social sciences, amplify our remarkable collections, facilitate transdisciplinary investigations, optimize experimentation, and provide a mechanism to help facilitate the University’s desire to tackle urgent questions.

During the summer of 2018, Thomas Teper was appointed as the Project Manager, Library Building Project – a three-year appointment that is intended to help coordinate and facilitate communications and project planning associated with the developing project. Working closely with Jeff Schrader, Assistant Dean for Library Facilities, and Heather Murphy, the Library’s Chief Communications Officer, Tom has begun developing a project website that will serve to document the project, to serve as an outreach mechanism, and to establish a framework for communicating with the Library’s community about the project’s progress and milestones.

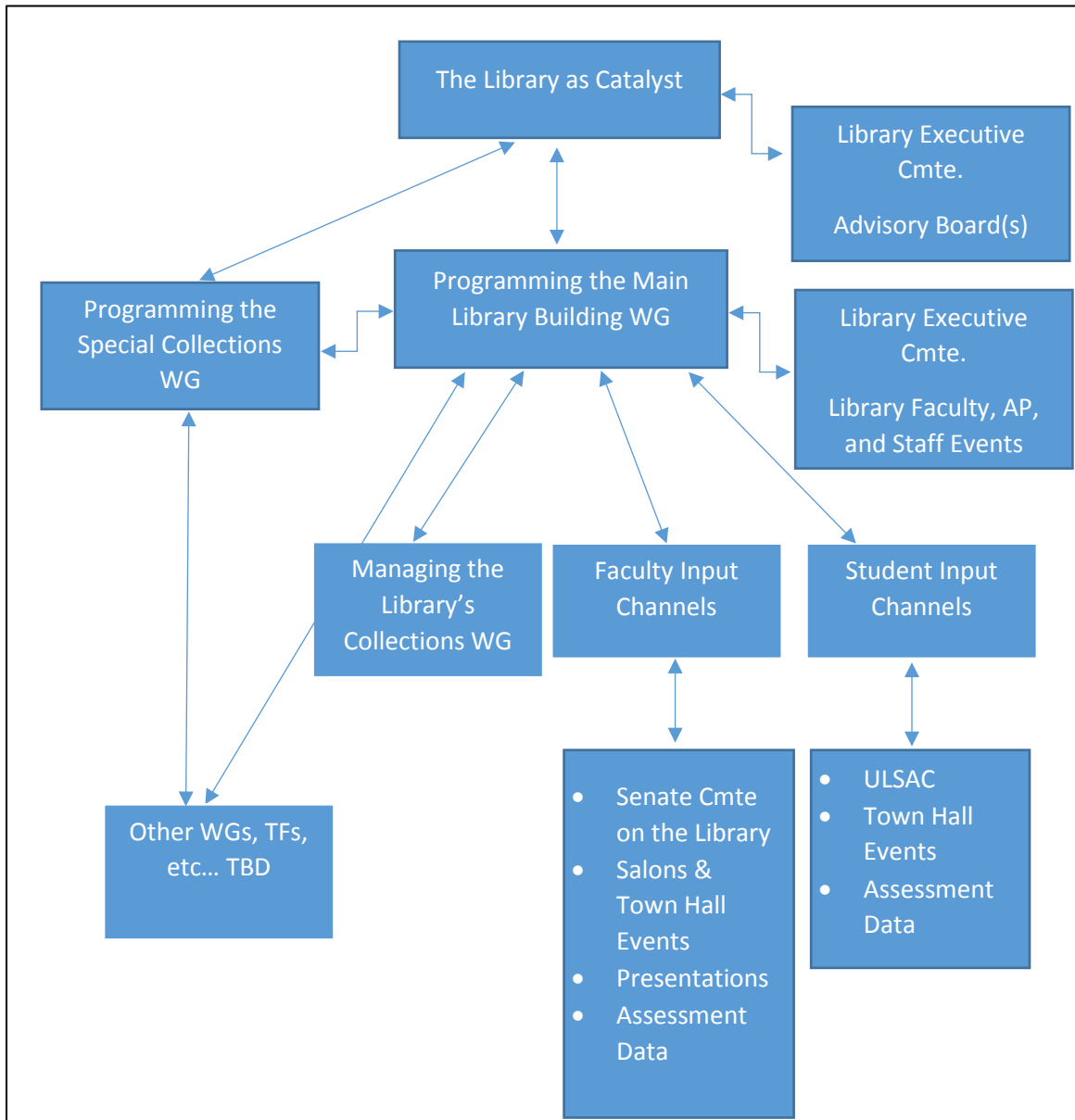
In discussions with Dean Wilkin, Tom and Jeff discussed mechanisms for soliciting input from key stakeholders. These discussions revolved around the need to form groups that can discuss and coordinate programming related to 1) service needs and the management of general library collections and 2) methods to plan for the integration of special collections units into a shared facility. These groups that will be chartered, along with other related activities coordinated by the Project Manager and Dean, will serve as key mechanisms for gathering the crucial input of stakeholders. The input from these stakeholders will be one key to the successful realization of the Library as Catalyst vision, and stakeholder input needs to flow seamlessly into the deliberations of the working groups focused on developing the service profiles of the Main Library Building and the Special Collections Building. Similarly, discussions related to collection management must be taken into account if we are to successfully program a facility/institute that will draw so heavily upon the collection-centric vision outlined in *The Library as Catalyst*.

A Model for Incorporating Input into the Planning Process

In considering the aforementioned discussions, the process being developed to support this project must seek to provide a consistent mechanism for integrating the input gathered from working groups within the University Library, from our faculty and student constituents, and from the various advisory bodies that help guide the University Library. This input must be distilled and collected into a cohesive

plan. The University Library will need a body that will help synthesize much of the input received from various bodies, weigh how the strengths and weaknesses of these proposals fit within the broader vision outlined in *The Library as Catalyst* proposal, and determine how we may realize that vision while remaining true to the historic institutional strengths that have made the University Library a keystone partner for supporting research and scholarship on this campus.

To that end, the model below illustrates how such input will be solicited, received, and integrated into a broader realization of the proposed vision. Although not an exhaustive list of potential working groups engaged in helping to model the broader program or channels by which input may be solicited, the model below provides the University Library with a roadmap toward realizing that vision.



Kicking Off the Process

Programming the Main Library Building WG

The process by which the University Library will begin tackling this will commence with the charging and kick-off of a Programming the Main Library Building Working Group. This group will occupy a pivotal place in helping the University Library's administration to gather and synthesize information necessary for both the long-term building project and the interim periods while the facilities in question remain in transition. This group will receive input from the aforementioned faculty and student channels as well as from the Managing the Library's Collection WG and the Programming the Special Collections Building WG. However, this working group will need to remain cognizant that its charge is not to produce a single monolithic report so much as it is to produce documents that can help provide timely guidance throughout the project before being assembled by the working group to present a more cohesive whole. The group will be advisory to Dean Wilkin but will work in close collaboration with all other groups formed as part of the Library as Catalyst project and in consultation with the Library's Executive Committee.

Managing the Library's Collections WG

The Managing the Library's Collections Working Group will largely consist of members of the Library's standing Collection Management & Planning Working Group. Augmented with multiple subject specialists from the disciplines represented in *The Catalyst*, this working group will provide a detailed, evidence-based model that will help inform the Library about how it will manage the collections during the transitional phase and into the new model of the Library. As appropriate, members of this group will also assist the Programming the Special Collections Building Working Group to model different strategies for managing their collections, including plans to help address the transitional phase during which buildings remain under construction.

Programming the Special Collections Building WG

The Programming the Special Collections Building Working Group will draw upon the administrative unit heads from those units proposed to be included in the Special Collections Building as well as key stakeholders from the campus. Broad input will be solicited from members of the units' professional and classified staff, as well as the unit's users, through their unit heads and through the creation of key task groups that will be assigned discrete responsibilities in the process. For example, we may task a sub-group with the charge of modeling an integrated service program or a sub-group to coordinate with the Managing the Library's Collections WG in order to help facilitate move management. It is anticipated that this group will draw heavily upon the reports of any consultants retained by the University Library.

Advisory Bodies, Salons and Town Hall Events

The input of teaching faculty, academic research personnel, and students will be critical to the successful realization of the developing vision in *The Library as Catalyst*. In addition to advisory bodies such as the Senate Committee on the Library and the University Librarian's Student Advisory Committee, the need to solicit input from broader bodies of faculty (across all ranks and stages of the promotion process) and students will require that the University Library hold many public events. The intent of these events will be to solicit input from larger segments of the campus community as well as to build support for the developing vision in *The Library as Catalyst*.

Assessment Data

The Working Groups charged with various aspects of this program should make ample use of assessment data, utilizing both the results from previous surveys as well as those generated during the course of the project.

Drafted – August 2018

Approved by EC – November 2018