

Providence College

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Providence College Library + Commons: A Case Study

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The *Library+Commons* – An Organic, Hybrid, Infused Model

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Abstract: Adapting concepts and experience from Information and Learning Commons, Providence College has developed a somewhat different model - *organic*, *hybrid* and *infused*:

- organic – based on local library and institutional culture, needs, change-readiness; emerging in increments as opportunities emerge, at a pace, at costs and to degrees apropos institutional resources
- hybrid – seamless blend of services/resources, of new/high-tech ↔ traditional/high-touch
- infused – the blend of services/resources is pushed out explicitly or implicitly into, and distributed among, all aspects of the physical and virtual library.

PC's Library+Commons incorporates resources and characteristics of Information and Learning Commons distributed throughout the entire library.

Institutional Profile.

Providence College (PC) is a 100-year-old Dominican Catholic liberal arts institution. The College upholds strong traditions across most of the institution, and this is evident in its sense of the library. Although primarily undergraduate liberal arts, PC is a Masters-I institution with an FTE of 4,404 (4,215 undergraduate and 189 masters-level graduate). PC is a top-tiered Masters-I institution (cf. its national peer group: the thirty-three member Affinity Group - <http://www.loyola.edu/library/affinity/members.htm>) and boasts a high graduation rate (consistently 85%-87%). Its student body is rather homogeneous and primarily residential.

PC is a member of the HELIN (Higher Education Library Information Network - <http://library.uri.edu/screens/libinfo.html>), a vibrant and stable consortium of ten higher education institutional and fifteen health science, law and other special libraries.

PC is a full collaborative participant in HELIN's III/Innovative Interfaces Inc., *Encore* discovery catalog (<http://library.uri.edu/>), which provides patrons with faceted, granular search capabilities and prompt-delivery (one- to two-day) access to approximately six million volumes. PC shares numerous resource tools with HELIN: III's ERM, Serials Solutions resolver, and the BePress' Digital Commons repository tool (<http://helindigitalcommons.org/> and <http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/>). The PC library houses approximately 380,000 paper and microform volumes, owns approximately 230,000 electronic volumes (primarily seventeenth-to-nineteenth century titles, e.g., the READEX *Evans* collections, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, etc.), and numerous electronic newspaper resources (including several series of the *Early American Newspapers* collection). PC subscribes to over 37,000 full-text electronic serials and over 1,000 paper/microform journals.

Type of Commons Model: Library+Commons.

Models - Beagle, et al (2006, 4 and 50f.), and Bailey-Tierney (2008, 1ff.) have presented schemas for four taxonomic levels and two generations of the Commons. Information Commons (IC) Levels I and II constitute the *first generation*; Learning Commons (LC) Levels III and IV constitute the *second generation*. The four taxonomic levels are:

- *Information Commons Level I* - an adjustment - add a “computer lab” in the library, some IT-library coordination, minimal space design implications- library-centric
- *Information Commons Level II* - isolated change – add, e.g., a broad range of multi-media productivity software, relatively extensive service and space integration and altered patterns involving intralibrary and library-IT areas - library-centric
- *Learning Commons Level III* - far-reaching change - add more non-library services and functions, e.g., student / faculty, course management system integration, strategically aligned with institutional mission - not library-centric
- *Learning Commons Level IV* - transformational change –add closer alignment with institutional mission, greater functional integration, digital repositories, extensive partnerships in student / faculty activities, integrated laboratories within and beyond library - not library-centric.

Description and Development of the PC Model - At Providence College, we have developed and built a somewhat different Commons model: *organic*, *hybrid* and *infused*:

- organic – developed and evolving naturally based on local library and institutional culture, needs, change-readiness; emerging in increments as opportunities emerge, at a pace, at costs and to degrees apropos institutional resources
- hybrid – seamless blend of IC-LC services/resources, of new/high-tech ↔ traditional/high-touch

- infused – the blend of IC–LC services/resources is pushed out explicitly or implicitly into, and distributed among, all aspects of the physical and virtual library.

The PC Library+Commons incorporates all the resources and characteristics of IC Levels I and II, as well as some from LC III and IV, distributed throughout the entire library.

Planning and implementation have evolved in an *organic, improvisational* and more *informal* fashion. Rather than the more common approach of explicit and staged strategic planning and tactical implementation of a Commons (IC I or II, LC III or IV), PC has pursued a more gradual, informal, incremental, an almost “stealth” approach to our Library+Commons planning and implementation. Rather than formally planning, designing and implementing IC/LC components, resources and services, we have organically developed and distributed many of these services and resources in a tiered fashion (simple/basic tier I to complex/advanced tier V) throughout the entire library. With a clear understanding of the multifaceted Commons models, we have adapted and applied these models as organizing principles, as a framework, as scaffolding, to build our Commons piece-by-piece, as opportunities have arisen (somewhat like working to complete a puzzle, a drawing, a painting or a sculpture, when one has the spirit, character and structure of the whole clearly in mind – Bailey, 2009, 17-20).

We have used extensively cross-trained, cross-functional library staff from all groups (professionals, support and student staff) and retrofitted, renovated and redesigned spaces and furnishings of all types and sizes to provide IC-LC resources and services throughout the library. We have repurposed and used internal staff and resources instead of developing formal (memorandum-of-understanding / MOA) partnerships with outside

areas (like IT), instead of bringing outside staff and resources into the library to provide resources and services. Rather than developing formal partnerships (more strategic contractual relationships, including MOA's) to build our Commons, we have focused on more informal, implicit (strategic or tactical and ongoing) and serendipitous, incidental (strategic, tactical or merely operational) relationships and collaborations (with, e.g., IT, Instructional Technology, the Center for Teaching Excellence, Media Services, the Office of Academic Services and Writing Center).

This approach has allowed us to create technology and teaching-learning-research resources, which are similar to those provided by external collaborative partners, and to infuse these resources into, and distribute these in a tiered fashion throughout, the library using enhanced library spaces and restructured, cross-functional staffing. We have adapted the scaffolding models of external (to the library) service and resource providers to create those same services and resources on a less grand, less complex level in the Librry+Commons (Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner used the spiral metaphor to demonstrate identical concepts and structures in tiered, taxonomic relationships – Bailey, 2009, 16-20).

We conceive of and apply the Commons as an organizing principle for our patrons, partners, services, resources, tools, spaces and activities to:

- Provide the most direct, positive impact on excellence of patron services
- Focus primarily on patron needs as they evolve
- Provide a seamlessly integrated (from the patron's perspective) continuum of services, tools, systems and resources, in-facility and on the Web

- Provide for the patron dynamic and seamless integration of Commons Web-based and in-facility resources, services and spaces, e.g., intuitive guidance, communication, just-in-time referrals
- Adapt for the patron the “one-stop shopping” model
- Adapt for the patron the proactive, dynamic, competitive model of the commercial sector
- Promote for the patron the mutual inclusion of high-touch ↔ high-tech
- Promote for the patron the inclusion and integration (from the patron’s perspective) of *extra-library, non-traditional* resources, services, tools & systems.

Our *organic, hybrid, infused* Library+Commons is the evolving library imbued with the spirit and character of the Commons adapted to PC’s particular needs, resources, and institutional change-readiness. We have interpreted and applied the Commons as a dynamic framework, in which the curriculum is: information research education resulting in knowledge creation, developing for research literacy; and in which the content is: high-touch↔high-tech tools, information resources, systems and services. In our Library+Commons we have created a *library-as-destination*, both the physical facility and the virtual space.

History and Evolution of the Library+Commons: Organic, Hybrid, Infused.

Early Facilities - The PC library facility and model date from the late 1960’s: exposed concrete, sealed windows and imposing, fortress-like architectural character and traditional, segregated service model. The 1969-vintage library boasted hierarchy and silos of services: three separate desks (information, circulation, reference), four separate groups of staff (students, support/classified, MLS professionals, administrative), and nine

separate departments (periodicals, acquisitions, cataloging, circulation, reference, government documents, archives and administration). Specific monographs and print series, print journals and microforms constituted the liberal arts canon. The College faculty and library staff have held dearly to this canon: specific informational items in a specific format.

Early Technology - The library catalog was automated in 1992 as part of the HELIN consortium providing several public catalog terminals (<http://library.uri.edu/screens/libinfo.html>). A CD-ROM database network (Silverplatter) and DIALOG mediated searching were added in the mid-1980's. An electronic classroom (18 stations with Web access and basic productivity software) was added in 1997, as were several public computers with basic productivity software. Most of the library's computers were located along exterior walls, because the concrete building presented significant barriers to additional wiring – power and data. As a result of this limiting factor, the library ironically became the first major building on the PC campus to establish a wireless network (802.11b) in 2001, using grant funding for this and related technologies. With the wireless network established and enabled, the library was able to locate and use technologies throughout the facility with minimal cabling concerns or restrictions.

Renovation Phase I - During the years 2000-2004, phase I of a three-phase library renovation was completed, treating the main/first floor with attractive, comfortable oak furnishings and public service desks, soft seating, new carpeting, and new glass and wood panel office spaces. This renovation was planned and completed *without* the Commons as an organizing principle; the main floor was made much more attractive, but

the Commons service and resource model was not implicit or primary in planning, design or implementation. The library (renovated main level and unrenovated, 1969 vintage second and lower-level floors) would need to be retrofitted into a Commons, which we did in 2005-2008 as opportunities arose. One example is the traditional, 1969-vintage reference desk, which we retrofitted with patron furniture (eleven chairs and barstools), double monitors, mice and keyboards (Bailey, 2009, 20-24) to transform the desk into a collaborative, patron-centered work station. The library had become a destination for students. Due to several factors, however, the renovation would not move to phase II until the summer of 2008.

Impetus for Change - In addition to facilities, technology tools and informational resources, human resources (leadership, teamwork, cohesive vision and foci) are essential to change and transformation for which the Commons is known. The essential role of human resources provided both dilemmas and opportunities for PC. The dilemmas: as a result of intralibrary conflict culminating in 2004, the library was without clear direction for almost a year. The opportunities: in 2005 I was brought to PC as the library director with a mandate to move the library forward using the Commons model, but to do so while calming, refocusing, energizing and unifying a polarized staff. In this context we began cultivating and promulgating the Library+Commons model.

Library+Commons Name - What's in a name? Beginning around the year 2000 and after heated public debate, several North American academic libraries and graduate LIS programs decided to replace the word "library" in their names with names suggesting more progressive, information-technology focused programs and services. In 2004 and 2005, numerous Commons colleagues debated the evolution of the Commons and the

various designations: Information Commons, Media Union, Learning Commons, among others. At the 2005 ACRL “IC to LC” panel (Bailey-Tierney, 2005), some audience members asked, if libraries should wait until the next Commons iteration or generation emerged before launching a Commons initiative. One of my close colleagues suggested combining the old (Library) with the new (Commons): thus emerged the Library+Commons (the “+” implies added, inclusive dimensions, as was popularized in LibQUAL+™).

At PC the deep cultural traditions caused uneasiness among some faculty, staff and administration, that the “library” might be replaced by an “information commons”. Thus, by devising the Library+Commons appellation, suggesting a seamless blending tradition with progress and innovation, we helped allay the fear of losing the spirit of their cultural traditions. Considering PC’s adherence to deep traditions and its limited change-readiness, we decided to literally grow an organic, hybrid Commons model, to begin informally and to proceed clearly and firmly into our Commons vision, but to do so in a gradual incremental, improvisational fashion.

Planning ↔ Implementation of Library+Commons.

Planning Background - Planning for the Library+Commons has proceeded in a purposeful but improvisational manner. We began in 2005 with shared reading, “Information Commons Redux” (Bailey, Tierney, 2002) and public presentations on campus and in local and regional library meetings: “The Role of the Library in the 21st Century” and “The Information Commons and Beyond.” We held a variety of meetings over the next eight months, in which the agenda always included Commons topics: focus on patron needs and services; cross-functionality and cross-training; seamless integration

of services from the *patron's* perspective; mutual inclusion of high-touch↔high-tech; taking incremental but strategic steps into the Commons. The numerous meetings included one-on-one conversations with all library staff; library all-staff, library PR Committee, liaisons and departmental meetings; meetings with the CIO and IT staff, Instructional Technology, Media Services, Center for Teaching Excellence, and presentations to Student Congress and to the Faculty Senate. The Commons concept became an implicit, and at times explicit, topic in most library meetings at PC and conversations and meetings across the state-wide HELIN consortium: Board of Directors, Reference, Cataloging, Serials, Acquisitions and Government Documents Committees.

Strategic Budgeting - Central to planning are the annual budgeting process and resultant approved budget. While budgeting is considered primarily tactical and operational, we have used budget-building and administering as a type of reverse- or stealth-strategic planning. With the Commons concept, its spirit, character and structure clearly in mind, we fashioned budgets with built-in Commons components and contingencies, which could be implemented as opportunities arose. Some examples 2005-2008:

- Increased training/travel funds facilitated Commons training of all types at all levels for all staff, much of which became train-the-trainer and resulted in broader impact and greater cross functionality.
- Increased technology funds facilitated targeted Commons projects:
 - Six to ten additional laptops per year, including some Macbooks, facilitated an impactful and popular student laptop checkout program.
 - VHS-to-DVD transfer units facilitated inter-media work.

- Nine Intel iMacs distributed around the library, most with Adobe Creative Suite and Bootcamp / Parallels / VM Ware, ten 8½” X 11” scanners, two 12” X 17” scanners, ABBYY Pro / OCR software, facilitated the implementation of a Macintosh Lab / Creation Station, a Digital Services Lab, and access to iMacs at Commons service desks.
- Second monitors, wireless mice and keyboards for three computers helped to transform the fortress-like reference desk into a patron-friendly, interactive teaching, learning and research station.
- Increased furniture funds facilitated targeted Commons projects:
 - Fifteen additional, comfortable patron chairs and bar stools helped to transform the patron-unfriendly (patron must stand) reference and circulation desks into patron-friendly stations (Bailey, 2009, 22).
 - Large, attractive tables and ergonomic (Herman Miller) caster-chairs helped transform a former microform storage room into a collaborative Macintosh Lab / Creation Station.
 - A tailor-designed service desk (InTeLeR – interactive teaching, learning and research – Bailey, 2009, 23-27.) and nine comfortable and ergonomic caster-chairs created a versatile, popular second-floor full-service station.
- Special capital equipment requests facilitated Commons projects:
 - Special requests for a self-checkout station (\$23,000) resulted in a table-top self-checkout station adjacent to the circulation desk and the front entrance, facilitating as much as 50% of material checkouts.

- Special requests for a cradle scanning station (\$10,000 ATIZ station plus two high-end Canon digital cameras) enhanced the Digital Services program, allowing larger-format and fragile books to be easily scanned.

We crafted each of these budget initiatives with the purpose of advancing the Commons in strategic increments as the environment allowed and opportunities occurred.

Incorporation of Serendipitous Opportunities - An opportunity emerged external to PC in 2005, which added momentum to PC's Commons planning. The HELIN consortium received a grant to purchase the Digital Commons (DC) repository product (<http://helindigitalcommons.org/>), and PC launched its Digital Commons repository (<http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/>) in January, 2006. Since it was a turn-key, remotely hosted system, we launched it with no Digital Services staff or facility. In the months following the launch of the DC, we began creating a Digital Services unit by restructuring 2.5 FTE staff: 1.5 FTE support staff (Digital Services Assistants) and a library faculty position (Digital Services and Cataloging librarian) in support of the digital repository initiative. The College funded technology tools and furnishings to support Digital Services and production spaces (including a three iMac Creation Station and eleven scanners), both in a production room and distributed throughout the library. We are now adding a second, multimedia digital repository (ContentPro) as well as metadata harvesting tools (for Digital Commons and ContentPro), with the metadata to be harvested and presented in our *Encore* faceted discovery catalog. We cultivated and grew the Commons organically in increments, in this serendipitous case, as a virtual repository.

All-Staff Research Trip - As we were launching our Digital Commons repository, we continued to cultivate and grow the Library+Commons in the physical library facility. We developed a plan to increase staff field research site visit of a model Learning Commons (the University of Massachusetts – Amherst) in 2006. The UMass Amherst Learning Commons had applied much of the Commons concept based in part on my work (especially the 2005 ACRL panel – see appendix) and that of numerous international Commons colleagues, almost to a Level IV LC. The UMass Amherst concept was very successful and very similar in character to what we were attempting to create at PC. The UMass Amherst Learning Commons staff served as hosts, guides and host lecturers to my staff and exposed them to advanced Commons concepts, which we then brought back to PC and adapted as opportunities arose.

Staff Restructuring - We restructured every position, which became vacant, for direct, maximal impact in advancing the Commons. Library support positions (interlibrary loan, cataloging, archives) became Library Commons Assistants levels I and II. Professional positions became Library+Commons Librarians (Technology and Access; Research and Education; Outreach; Special and Archival Collections; Serials). Library student workers became Student Commons Assistants levels I, II, and III.

Name Branding - What's in a name redux? One of the team-building, staff-empowering activities, in which we engaged, was the re-naming of several service desks and the graphical branding of the Library+Commons. As the staff were being restructured into Library Commons Assistants and Librarians and Student Commons Assistants, we embarked on a series of naming contests for facilities areas. All staff were included and many submitted names for the main-floor reference desk (later for the 2nd-

floor information desk and the Macintosh Lab) and all staff voted. The reference desk became the Information Station; the Macintosh lab became the Creation Station; and the information desk eventually became the InTeLeR Station (Bailey, 2009, 23-27). Once we had created significant visible signs of the Library+Commons, we invited the PC and HELIN communities to an Open House (see Appendix 1 and Flickr links in Resources).

Web presence – While the virtual, Web-based Commons remained limited by the College's template-structured content management system (CMS), we launched a Website Review Task Force consisting of Library Commons Librarians, Library Commons Assistants and Student Commons Assistants to explore potential refinements and improvements of our Web presence. The Task Force spent over a year investigating best-practices: they contributed to Primary Research Group's *Academic Library Website Benchmarks* (2008), and eventually presented a much-improved Library+Commons Website developed primarily by one of the Student Commons Assistant Task Force members: www.providence.edu/library. While the CMS restricted their efforts, the revised Website more clearly reflected patron perspective – it was designed by a Student Commons Assistant. The College is now moving to a new CMS, and the library's Task Force (including students) is playing a central role in its design and roll-out.

Graphical Branding - What's in a logo graphic? To celebrate the new Library+Commons brand of resources and services, the staff created a graphic pallet and logo design (see Appendix 2). The Library+Commons graphics have been used in signage, staff badges, letterhead, computer desktops and PPT's.

Renovation Phase II – The second floor / phase II of the renovation (see Flickr link in Resources) commenced the summer of 2008 with extensive re-shelving (modified

compact shelving), new carpeting, new soft-seating, and new study / computer tables and private carrels. This phase of the renovation was planned and completed *with* the

Commons as an organizing principle, including:

- Furnishings and their placements: combinations of deep-quiet individual private study carrels; quiet group study tables; soft-seating “living rooms” and individual soft chairs
- Technology: 22 high-end public space PC’s plus 19 high-end PC’s in a combined e-classroom / open lab; an additional iMac with Adobe Creative Suite and Parallels; two scanners; wireless, a hand-held phone for roaming flexibility
- Tailor-designed and –milled InTeLeR Station (Bailey, 2009, 23-27) – interactive teaching, learning and research station; two high-end PC’s, one high-end iMac with Adobe Creative Suite and Parallels; dual monitors; dual, wireless mice and keyboards; ergonomic, attractive seating for nine; power for fifteen with space and power for six additional wireless laptops and six additional seats.

The Commons Council – The creation of the Commons Council in June of 2008 created more balance and cohesion among professional staff by bringing together all library professionals, some of whom felt that their voices and hesitations were not sufficiently heard, that support / classified and student staff voices were given inordinate attention and authority in the Library+Commons. The creation of the Council has been successful in that all professionals have an official seat at the Commons table, so that they can choose whether to use the seat responsibly in support of the Commons. Support / classified and student staff continue to be included in almost all Commons discussions and activities - rising to the highest common denominator.

Training and Cross-Training – We have been actively developing and providing Commons training and cross-training since 2005. The curriculum of training sessions has been developed as SCA training, but all staff are invited and progressively more staff have participated over time – student staff training has evolved into all-staff training. Training topics include: LC call numbers system; all aspects of circulation; book repair; photocopy machine and printer maintenance and trouble-shooting; laptop checkout; productivity software support; wireless network and logon issues; scanning and file-conversion and file-attachment issues; manipulation and processing of multimedia files; metadata issues. Now SCA's often *teach* training sessions in technology, scanning, among other things – reverse-teaching and mentoring (see Flickr link in resources).

Strategic Staffing - In 2007 we created the position Library Commons Librarian for Technology and Access, which supervises all aspects of circulation and access, as well as all aspects of library technologies. This position serves as the Library+Commons IT liaison and as our in-house IT proxy, except in instances, where more expert, very complex issues arise requiring PC's attention. In the Library+Commons, eight FTE Library Commons Assistants constitute what we have dubbed the *InTeLeR©orps* – our cadre of technology-savvy and -facile teaching, learning and research assistants. All are facile with technology and several of them are relative techsperts, some hold MLS degrees. Several of the LCA's and SCA's have participated in intensive IT train-the-trainer workshops since 2007 and are official liaisons with the IT help-desk (they can put in tech-trouble tickets whenever a problem occurs, which is beyond the Library+Commons staff's ability to resolve).

Two LCA II positions (one Tuesday-Saturday days, the other Sunday-Thursday evenings) now share coordination of 1) the 2nd-floor InTeLeR Station (staffing, training, monitoring, statistics-gathering, assessing); 2) all ILL activities (shared among 4 FTE staff and a pool of 27 SCA's as needed); and 3) Library+Commons-wide SCA recruiting, hiring, training, scheduling, evaluating, and assigning of SCA tasks on an as-needed and project-based basis. The two LCA II's maintain and moderate an SCA listserv and an SCA Outlook Exchange calendar viewable by all Library+Commons staff; thus, all Library+Commons staff know when all SCA's are scheduled and can request assistance via the LCA II's, the SCAs' supervisors.

All Library+Commons staff are invited to serve at the InTeLeR Station. The InTeLeR Station is multifunctional: a public workspace with three computer stations and nine comfortable chairs; a walk-up full-service desk; a teaching station (for as many as fifteen patrons); and a staff training station, since it has the full range of Windows and Macintosh software tools, as well as two scanners.

ILL requests are processed by the four-member ILL team at all hours of operation, whenever the online patron-initiated ILL requests are submitted. SCA's are assigned by the LCA II's to tasks, projects and activities on an as-needed basis ("utility-infielder", "National Guard" model).

The Library+Commons staff continue to investigate, pilot, and implement numerous Commons tools, initiatives and programs. These concepts and ideas originate most often organically from the staff (student, support/classified, professional), rather than from a prescriptive plan. The Commons culture has been promulgated, the Commons spaces, tools, resources and services have been cultivated, now the Commons stewards (students,

support and professional staff, the *InTeLeR©orps*) are nurturing the Commons as their own. Some recent and ongoing Commons initiatives include:

- “23 Things” – Library-Learning / Web 2.0 tools, a library community staff development program
- Microsoft’s Office Communicator System (OCS) – the future of workplace integrated communication tools
- SCA’s creation and production of the New Student Orientation brochure – providing the student’s perspective for student consumption, using MSPublisher and Macintosh InDesign
- Library Pod-/Vodcasts - LCA’s and SCA’s developing tutorial casts about the library beginning with a Summer Orientation piece, to be archived of the Library+Commons Website
- Text/SMS Research (Reference) Pilot with the Library Alliance System
- Mobile Devices for teaching, learning and research / M-Libraries Work Group
- Library-a-production-lab concept at work in the Library+Commons – in-house graphics (see appendix), InTeLeR©orps apparel (shirts, tote-bags, caps, scarves, ties), tutorials-
http://www.providence.edu/library/Tutorials/self_checkout/self%20check_out.htm
- SCA’s digitization of hundreds of biology faculty slides for faculty and student analysis and research
- New Books Area – In-Facility ↔ Virtual integrating our new-books area, LibGuides and our *Encore* catalog with book-covers (see Resources).

The Library+Commons staff are now sponsoring and putting on a PC

Library+Commons internal conference, under the rubric “unconference”

(<http://www.unconference.net/>). It will be professional but informal and include all staff.

We are inviting all interested staff, including SCA’s, to submit a proposal on the idea/topic they’d like to present. The presentation will be short (often referred to as lightning rounds), with the outcome being a collaborative information/sharing, show-and-tell, awareness generation experience for all staff (staff to staff, staff to student, student to staff, etc.). The PC Library+Commons Unconference will be scheduled to complement the fall semester SCA training sessions, and our state-wide HELIN colleagues will be invited to attend. Ever more such productive ideas flow from Library+Commons staff, revealing the growth of ever greater sense of common responsibility and authority for the Library+Commons.

Evolution and Future of Library+Commons

The Library+Commons retains much of the College’s traditional character and spirit seamlessly integrated with new and evolving infusions of technology and services.

In addition to current resources, services and tools, the Library+Commons will:

- Add more Macintosh computers, scanners and Macintosh laptops for checkout, and more collaborative group study spaces over time, as patron use and preferences suggest;
- Provide more refreshments over time, as patron use and preferences suggest;
- Provide extended hours over time, as patron use and preferences suggest;
- Add the ContentPro multimedia digital repository (summer-fall, 2009) and ever more digitized collections; all Digital Commons and ContentPro collections metadata are harvested and presented in the *Encore* faceted discovery catalog;

- Add a federated search tool (EBSCO, summer-fall, 2009) simultaneously searching fifty-seven full-text databases;
- Provide more mobile-library and GPS location-based services (phone-, smart-phone-, netbook-based);
- Provide more just-in-time (with fewer just-in-case) resources and services;
- Create a Library+Commons which is truly a teaching, learning and research laboratory for students, faculty and staff.

Faculty Commons - Most Commons implementations are student Commons, whether IC, LC or other permutation or appellation. While a goodly number of faculty (and Masters and Ph.D. graduate students) use the Student Commons, many of their more specialized and complex teaching and research needs go unmet or are provided for only in departmental or institute or center libraries and facilities, but not in a central Commons. At PC we intend to build a Faculty Commons for Teaching and Research as we have built out Student Library+Commons for integrated teaching learning and research (InTeLeR).

We have designated spaces in our facilities, appropriate furnishings, telecommunication and technology tools in the Library+Commons to be developed for and dedicated to faculty needs. These resources may begin as shared technology-equipped office spaces, where faculty can work (grading, gathering, processing and archiving research data, meeting with colleagues or students). To develop the Faculty Commons we are consulting with our collaborative affiliates: the Instructional Technology Development Program (ITDP), the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), Academic Media Services (AMS), and departmental teaching faculty. We are also

consulting with numerous international Faculty Commons colleagues (Canada, Europe, Asia-Pacific) for Faculty Commons best-practices. Over time we intend to provide ever more spaces, services, tools and resources to facilitate faculty needs for teaching and research in the Commons. Some of these will be “light” or less complex iterations of those provided by the ITDP, CTE, AMD and facilities and labs in departments and schools (Arts & Sciences, Business, Professional Studies and Continuing Education).

Digital Repositories - We plan to grow our digital repositories (Digital Commons and ContentPro), both of which have very large capacity (storage, searchability and retrieval) as well as open-access and SUSHI-compliance. These will allow us to digitize and to provide ongoing access to the ca. 80% of our intellectual capital, which is now lost and inaccessible. With our digital services program, we intend to facilitate in the Commons teaching and learning “moments” and opportunities for all of our patrons to become ever more conversant and facile with all aspects of the digital world: selecting useful materials for digitization; administering taxonomies and ontologies to create collections and make them optimally searchable and usable; acquire facility with the tools, such as flatbed, cradle, stack-feed, scanners, digital camera tools, multilingual OCR like ABBYY and Omnipage; to become proficient in format transferral; to develop competency with robust productivity software such as the Adobe Creative Suite and Final Cut Pro.

Virtual Commons - We also intend to expand the Commons concept effectively to our Web presence. With our new Content Management System, we intend to create the virtual, Web-based portion of the Commons in such a way that the Virtual and Physical Library+Commons interact dynamically, with dynamic referrals between the two realms

(physical and virtual); to provide more disintermediated, patron-initiated and patron-controlled services (LibQUAL+™ “informational control” domain).

Concluding Remarks - We have the basic physical spaces, resources and tools in place. If our Library+Commons culture remains flexible, adaptable and open to new, evolving ideas and paradigms, we will continue to evolve organically as we have over the past five years. With our intelligent, energized staff of student, support and professional staff, we are at a threshold, a tipping point, where the Commons energy and vibrancy has imbued much of the library and the PC community beyond the library. Our Library+Commons is evolving into common ownership, common responsibility, and common leadership.

Resources

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Appendices:

1 - Providence College Library+Commons Brochure

2 – Providence College Library+Commons Branding Graphics July09