

Book Reviews



Difficult Decisions: Closing & Merging Academic Libraries. Sara Holder and Amber Butler Lannon, eds. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2015. 253p. Paper, \$58 (ISBN 978-083898791-9)

The 2008 recession brought considerable budget and resource pressures to many academic libraries in the United States. One of the difficult options available for academic library directors was to consolidate collections and staff from branch libraries into the main library, especially at large campuses. While this decision brought about considerable cost savings in the long run, it also entailed even greater political, emotional, and morale issues related to staff reductions, academic faculty displeasure and pressures at the subject and discipline level, and overall administrative support at a high level. Restructuring operations, such as reducing service points, redesigning spaces, reducing print footprints, and cross-training are other options available that academic libraries must do in this new environment.

This book provides case studies around the topic of closing and merging libraries, both internally and externally to one's own campus. It is composed of fourteen chapters, starting with a set of three chapters that examine the New Service Model (NSM), a multiyear program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Libraries to move from a decentralized system to a large-scale restructuring and realignment of library services. The overview of NSM and its implementation and process is provided in chapter 1, while chapter 2 focuses on the consolidation of a number of international studies libraries and reading rooms into a single International and Area Studies (IAS) Library. Chapter 3 describes the merger of various social services, health, and education studies libraries and services into the Social Sciences, Health, and Education Library through the NSM program. Chapter 4 details the personal experience of one librarian involved in two separate academic libraries undergoing massive transition and change, one through consolidation and the other through downsizing. A survey of those librarians involved at both institutions was completed, and the analyses and results are shared in this chapter. The transformation of the Welch Medical Library at Johns Hopkins University is the topic of chapter 5, in relation to financial, technological, and staffing challenges. The decentralization of the Purdue University Libraries during a ten-year period from fifteen specialized libraries and units to an organizational structure loosely arranged around four broad subject areas comprises chapter 6, while chapter 7 discusses the consolidation of seven science libraries into one science and engineering library at Columbia University. Three branch library mergers at McGill University are detailed in chapter 8, while the closure of the 100-year-old Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library and the consolidation of its staff and collections with the University of California, San Diego Geisel Library are documented in chapter 9. The collections mergers at three social science libraries at the University of California, Berkeley campus and the role that data played in merging, consolidating, and improving collection-related decisions, as well as the impact on users is described in chapter 10. The merger of two large print collections and the human logistics that this entailed are the focus of chapter 11, including the cleanup phase and planning for the future use of the merged collection. Moving into the digital environment, chapter 12 details the creation of a unified library web presence of two Georgia universities, and the challenges and opportunities that this created in collaboration and partnerships with other university units. Academic library leadership in relation to academic library

management is the fascinating content of chapter 13, with an emphasis on how these two are very different from each other and how management is emphasized over leadership in professional education. A case study of a failed merger between a library and an information technology services unit in an academic setting is the backdrop for this discussion. Finally, chapter 14 examines the closure and consolidation of a number of branch libraries at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Library during a two-year period and the challenges of communication, collaboration, participation, and messaging that this entailed.

The subject of closing, consolidating, and merging branch libraries, collections, and operations is always a difficult one, especially as it relates to history and historical precedence, uniqueness of services to particular faculties and disciplines, the emotional and psychological distress for both the library and the subject faculty, and the often political challenges to enact financial and staffing savings in the long run. This book stands out because it is totally devoted to the topic, thus providing a number of excellent case studies and personal experiences that can be mined and digested by library administrators who must direct and lead these types of reorganizations in the future. There are some great figures, charts, pictures, and tables included with many of these chapters, which provide additional resources and data for the reader to incorporate into their own specific situations. The level of emotional angst and energy for many of the authors surrounding their experiences lends an air of appreciation, empathy, and credibility around much of the content. This book gets beyond the theory and details the practice and experience of numerous individuals involved at the grassroots of planning, communicating, organizing, and leading academic libraries through consolidations, mergers, and closings. — *Bradford Lee Eden, Valparaiso University*

Ronald C. Jantz. *Managing Creativity: The Innovative Research Library*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016 (*Publications in Librarianship*; no. 70). 185p. Paper, \$44.00 (ISBN 978-083898834-3)

The foreword to this book sets the tone for the content and direction of the overall topic, which is a detailed study of the research literature and theories on innovation, and how new models for innovation relate to North American research libraries and their future. James G. Neal, university librarian emeritus from Columbia University, provides the vocabulary in the foreword for what research libraries will be in the future: expansive, schizophrenic, legacy, infrastructure, repository, portal, enterprise, public interest, virtual, virtuoso, and virtuous. He then indicates how the author (building on his 2013 doctoral dissertation) will provide the theory, analysis, and impetus for research libraries to work with innovation in what he terms the “current period of polygamy ... the coming period of parabiosis ... and the future period of particularism” (vii). Part of this process will involve the dismantling of traditional bureaucratic and hierarchical structures for more agile and modular systems. Neal indicates that the 2013 ARL strategic plan defines the what of research library innovation, while this book provides the how.

The author bases his insights on his research on innovation models and theories and then applies them to the world of research libraries. The book is divided into three sections: a historical perspective of library innovation and the theories of innovation (chapters 1–3), the research model and the results of the empirical analysis of innovation in ARL libraries (chapters 4–9), and additional avenues of research related to the innovation culture in libraries (chapters 10–12). Written primarily for those within academic libraries who are managers, administrators, leaders, and future leaders, the book provides a useful introduction to organizational innovation as well as the author’s dissertation and findings related to innovation in ARL libraries. This study is