

UC HASTINGS COLLEGE OF THE LAW STRATEGIC PLAN: PART ONE

Developing a Strategic Plan to Streamline the Circulation Department of the University of  
California, Hastings College of the Law's Library

Part One: Literature Review; Mission, Vision & Value Statements; Environmental Scan; &  
SWOT Analysis

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## **Abstract**

This report, the first of two, introduces the situation of the Hastings College of the Law Library circulation department and the atmosphere in which this situation has arisen. The Library faces major budget shortages, and needs to streamline the circulation department to improve organizational efficiency. Through a literature review, mission statement review, and environmental scan, this paper provides the context for Hastings' current issues. This paper also attempts to pinpoint potential areas for solutions through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.

*Keywords: academic law library, circulation department, streamlining*

## **Introduction**

The UC Hastings' Law Library supports the educational and research needs of the University of California, Hastings' College of the Law community. In addition to Hastings' students and faculty, the community includes practicing attorneys who are current members of the California State Bar Association, large and small law firms, other academic and legal libraries, and the libraries for California's state, federal and county court systems (Hastings Library, personal communication, 2012).

Over the past five years the university has experienced budget cuts and the library has been forced to reduce its staff significantly (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012). In order to maintain the library's high standard of service within the parameters of the reduced budget, Professor Jenni Parrish (Law Library Director) tasked Mr. Vincent Moyer (Foreign, International, and Comparative Law Librarian) and Mr. Tony Pelczynski (Circulation and Reference Librarian) with developing a strategy to streamline the library's circulation department. Professor Parrish suggested that this streamlining could include developing a "best practices" model for a law library circulation departments, assessing and possibly/or updating the computer system, and examining staffing needs. By Spring, 2013, Professor Parrish would like Mr. Moyer and Mr. Pelczynski to present plans, recommendations, and implements proposals for developing a streamlined circulation department (T. Pelczynski, personal communication, September 19, 2012).

Since 2007, the circulation department staff has been gradually reduced. It now includes one half- time professional circulation librarian (Mr. Pelczynski), and 20 part- time law students employed as part of the federal work-study program (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012). This report will investigate the feasibility of streamlining the the

circulation department of an academic law library that has already reduced much of its full and part-time staff. We will discuss the current trends in academic circulation departments, and examine the benefits and drawbacks of incorporating them into Hastings' current system.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Role of the Academic Circulation Department**

The circulation department of any library is responsible for managing the whereabouts of the library's collections. This primarily includes checking in, checking out, and shelving materials. In an academic setting, the circulation department will often also deal with course reserves. In his survey of tasks and trends in access services (i.e. circulation), Tolppanen (2005) surveyed 131 academic librarians about their institutions and whether or not they perform the 69 tasks that the author had previously identified. Approximately half of the 69 tasks were performed by 60% or more of the respondents and were thus termed "core" services. These core services included everything including those mentioned above, opening and closing the library, recording library statistics, and managing patron records in databases (p. 4-5). Primary access service tasks, Tolppanen determined, can be split into "making information available to user," and "facilities management" (2005, p. 8).

In addition to these basic yet vital roles, the academic circulation department also interacts with other departments to perform library-wide services, including collection management and marketing. Lenz and Wohl (2008) argue that developing collections must include the head of circulation. In her review of collection development and management literature from 2009-2010, Thomas (2012) agrees, and also emphasizes that the reason behind including the circulation head in this process is because of the importance of basing acquisition

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decisions on circulation data. While basing collection decisions on data may seem like common sense, a study by *Library Journal*, cited in Knievel, Wicht, and Connaway (2006), found that faculty recommendations were the single most important factor in the purchasing decision process. Although the *Library Journal* study is dated (surveying was done in 1998), the recommendation trend remains entrenched in academic libraries in particular. Basing acquisitions primarily on faculty opinion can lead to an unrepresentative collection. With the availability of detailed circulation data, this process should evolve, as libraries now have detailed circulation data available (Knieval et al., 2006, p. 36). ; It is particularly important to rely on data-driven collections management in today's economic climate, where decisions allocate money from a limited budget and must therefore be justified, for example, by use or request statistics. Circulation can provide this data (Knieval et al., 2006, p. 35). Knievel et al. provided an illustrative case study of this on the monograph collection at the University of Colorado at Boulder (2006).

A second library-wide service provided by the circulation department is marketing. Tolppanen (2005) found that answering patrons' questions was a core task of access service desks. Jones, McCandless, Kiblinger, Giles, and McCabe (2011) point out that this customer interaction provides an excellent opportunity for marketing. Marketing library services can be as simple and inexpensive as good signage and helpful employees. Marketing is useful to both the institution and the user by making sure that users know what resources are offered; thereby giving the institution justification for resource budgeting (Jones et al., 2011, p. 108). Circulation departments also have the ability to influence marketing by their control over the physical space of the library. Jones et al. (2011) write that simple strategies such as visually appealing end displays and browsing sections can make large differences in circulation statistics. These

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strategies require no additional funding and no measurable increase in staff time (p. 116).

Jones et al. (2011) also note that changes in technology mean the circulation desk is now often the first stop for technical questions and reference assistance, too (p. 107). This trend has been precipitating a change in the organizational structure of the circulation department, as reviewed in the next section.

### **Trends in Academic Circulation Department Organization**

The era of a single-minded circulation department is over. Due to an increase in the overlap between services offered by circulation and interlibrary loan (ILL) departments, over the past twenty years there has been a general trend towards merging the two into “access services” (Austin, 2010, p. 145). Overall in academic libraries, circulation has decreased while ILL has increased, creating an ideal scenario for combining services (Carver, 2010, p. 75-76). This trend is also true for the subcategory of academic law libraries.

There are two schools of thought for combining circulation and ILL. Austin (2010) makes a point that although the trend is to combine, combination of services does *not* mean combination of departments (p. 145). He uses the University of Colorado at Boulder’s library as an example of this. Although the library merged services into “Circulation and Interlibrary Loan,” the departments remained distinct, with separate supervisors and student workers. Initially the merger did not create new efficiencies because the department work-flows remained overlapping. Through work-flow analysis, however, the library determined that their major inefficiencies lay in materials handling; this led to the creation of an inter-department “materials management center.” Staff remained in their own departments, but were subdivided into teams for circulation, reserves, ILL, and materials management, (which consisted of shelving, scanning, retrieving ILL materials, etc.). The materials management team staff were primarily

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students, who could be trained for the materials tasks easily, and who would then be available for additional work in either the circulation or the ILL department. This cross-training proved to be particularly effective in times of short-staffing (e.g. finals week). The University of Colorado at Boulder case study showed measurable success: Austin reported that student FTE went from 13 to 12.5 while the library actually increased ILL fill rates by 10% (p. 157).

Like the University of Colorado at Boulder, many academic libraries have switched to combined access services while maintaining separate circulation and ILL departments. The second option, though, is to create a new integrated department. Hersey (2004) contends that an integrated department is more efficient, since amalgamated access services tend to retain departmental overlap (p. 2). Hersey goes on to say that since online services empower patrons to complete basic access service tasks independently (e.g. check due dates, pay fines, renew and request materials), then academic libraries would do well to gear this new department more towards course support, which still requires human facilitation (p. 5). A course support department would cover the basic circulation and ILL services, but with more focus on electronic reserves. This focus would further enable the department to outreach with faculty and students.

Access services may also include additional functions from other library departments. In a study of the Georgia Tech library, Wang and Henson (2011) reported that reference and circulation services were combined at one physical location so that staff would be freed for other projects, and users could find answers for all types of questions at one location. The actual reference and circulation departments were not merged, but during the project's pilot phase, employees from both were cross-trained to provide consistent support. Wang and Henson (2011) found that the combined services desk reduced barriers of entry for library patrons by providing a one-stop shop. Whether or not this would work with a student-based circulation staff, such as

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that of Hastings, is uncertain. The Georgia Tech initiative involved a significant amount of staff training, which would not be feasible to invest in temporary, part-time employees.

Su (2008) provides a slightly different perspective on combining reference and circulation services. Although she agrees that such a merge benefits reference services by capitalizing on the circulation department's high visibility, she points out that often the combination must be somewhat one-sided, as reference librarians have a higher level of training and expertise than circulation staff (p. 78-79). This is not necessarily negative, but Su makes clear that in a merged services situation, it is important to state specific role expectations for cross training (2008, p. 81).

The decline of student staff, which used to be most populous in the circulation department, is another trend in academic circulation departments. Carver (2010) argues that circulation departments have historically had a focus on specialization, division of labor, and efficient processing. These created a largely clerical operation. However, new technology contributes to the continuing efficiency and automation of this clerical aspect, and allows the circulation department to expand its role from that of fixed routines to something more fluid and expansive (p. 73-74). In his survey of academic circulation trends, Tolppanen (2005) also found that many respondents predicted a decline in student staff due to lack of expertise and automation of routine tasks (p. 12).

The remaining student staff must adapt to a changing circulation department. Austin (2010) shows an example of the benefits of cross-training student staff at the University of Colorado at Boulder library; Aladrid and Sullivan (2009) agree. Their analysis of a department merge at the University of Denver demonstrates that cross-training students between circulation and ILL, but having the students supervised by a single permanent staff member, allowed for



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smoother work-flow and a reduction of access services staff hours by 37.5 hours/week (p. 223-224).

Reorganizing departments into access services and shifting student staff roles are examples of human resource trends in academic circulation departments. Restructuring of fees and loan terms is an example of a policy trend. Rupp, Sweetman, and Perry discuss this specifically in their 2010 article reviewing the New York University Bobst Library's experiment with fee restructuring. According to Rupp et al. the traditional circulation department attitude of "collections preservation and maintenance" meant all materials had to be easily available, regardless of actual demand (p. 159). This type of thinking made sense at one time, but in the new age of information explosion, the circulation demand tends to be more dispersed. The Bobst Library decided to experiment with fee restructuring in an effort to refocus their circulation attitude toward patron needs (p. 160). The library reduced late fees, and extended loan times and leniency; results showed a minor loss of fee income, but a major improvement in user satisfaction (p. 173).

In an era time of increasing competition for budget resources, user satisfaction must be an increasing concern for academic libraries. Libraries must prove their worth, which the circulation department can play a key role in determining. As we saw above with Hersey (2004), library outreach through course support strengthens and maintains relationships with faculty and students—whose support and advocacy are instrumental to the library's success. Carver (2010) also suggests that circulation departments make greater use of sophisticated metrics to show *how* their library is being used, and how departmental organization decisions are working to improve this use (p. 82). Merging to form access services is one important example of how academic circulation departments are changing with the times to support their patrons.

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### **Mission Statement**

An organization's mission statement embodies its goals and is thus the driving force behind decisions made within and about the organization. The Hastings Law Library's mission statement is:

The UC Hastings Law Library supports the educational and research needs of the UC Hastings College of the Law community. The Library serves as a research partner with the school's faculty and students. The Library's print and electronic collections directly support the UC Hastings faculty, UC Hastings students, the current curriculum, and the College's affiliated programs. The Library staff works closely with the UC Hastings faculty and students to provide access to the Library's collections and to facilitate access to other research and teaching resources. The Library aims to provide for its authorized users an environment suitable for research, study, instruction, and reading. (Retrieved at: <http://library.uchastings.edu/library/about/policies/conduct.html>)

As a subsidiary of the UC Hastings College of Law, the library must tailor its mission to that of its parent. According to Kelsh (2005), law library mission statements should cover the customer and his need premise, the library's value premise, and the uniqueness of the library (p. 328). Although the Hastings Law Library mission statement is overly verbose, it does accomplish two of Kelsh's three requirements: the customer and his need premise, and, to a more limited result, the library's value premise. In other words, the Hastings mission statement includes who its users are and what broad services it can provide them. This statement does not, however, discuss the ultimate *value* of its broad services, nor does it distinguish itself from any other part of the College of Law that might provide research facilities.

The circulation department of the Hastings Law Library does not have a mission statement of its own, as is typical of departments within an organization. However, the circulation department does fulfill vital roles in accomplishing the mission statement of the library as a whole, namely in terms of access to print collections and providing an "environment suitable for research, study, instruction, and reading" (2012). As Kelsh (2005) points out, one use

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for a mission statement is to justify the existence or actions of the library to the parent organization (p. 324). In the case of the Hastings circulation department, it can use the library's mission statement to justify its own existence.

Most law library mission statements include a set of specific directives designed to clarify the broader, more values-based core statement. For example, the University of North Carolina Law Library's mission statement defines the institution in terms of purpose, then uses a bulleted list to specify how the library will accomplish this purpose:

The Kathrine R. Everett Law Library supports the education of Carolina Law students, acts as a research partner with the faculty and students, and serves the legal information needs of University students and faculty, the legal community, and the residents of North Carolina. To that end, the Law Library's mission is:

1. To research, develop and implement innovative services, instruction and creative uses of technology to access, manage and communicate knowledge;
2. To collect, organize and preserve legal resources, and provide access to information to enhance and support legal and law related research and scholarship;
3. To teach formal courses in law, legal research and law related subjects in the Law School and the University.
4. To maintain a physical environment conducive to study, research and scholarship, and;
5. To foster research, education, and leadership in law librarianship, legal research and information and library science. (2010.)

This format of a mission statement also helps to distinguish the roles within the library. In the case of the Hastings circulation department, a bulleted list of target accomplishments, as demonstrated above, would make it clear how the functions of circulation meet the larger mission of the library. Kelsh (2005) mentions that a mission statement can “provide a sense of stability and reassurance for employees and institutional stakeholders” (p. 327). For the Hastings circulation department, this seems particularly apt.

## **Environmental Scan**

### **History and Demographics**

UC Hastings College of the Law was opened in 1878 as the first legal department for the University of California. Although located in downtown San Francisco, the Regents planned to move the school to the main Berkeley campus upon completion of an appropriate building. After the Berkeley campus opened a separate law school, the University of California kept Hastings as a stand-alone law school campus at its San Francisco location. (UC Hastings Website, 2012).

The Hastings' Law Library holds more than 650,000 volumes. The online catalog system provides access to much of the collection, and the library itself offers members access to numerous online databases; the inter-library loan services are restricted to current Hastings students, faculty, and staff (UC Hastings, 2012).

The library's primary demographic is Hastings' 1300 students, its faculty, and its professional staff. Most of the law librarians at Hastings have dual JD/MLIS degrees and are responsible for teaching legal research classes to first year students. The librarians' main function is to assist professors in their academic research; to that end reference librarians are assigned to specific professors and are responsible for working with these professors as they complete legal and friend of court briefs, journal articles, and general research in their fields (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012).

As an up-to-date law library, Hastings offers paid memberships for legal professionals, law firms, libraries, and courts. Unlike student and faculty members, persons with paid memberships may only access online databases such as LexisNexis, Westlaw, and HeinOnline, while actually in the library itself. Hastings is not open to members of the general public except those with a demonstrated need to access U.S. Government documents kept in the library as part

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of the Federal Depository Program (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012).

As an academic library servicing highly specialized professionals, Hastings must constantly strive to update its collection and retain the most current legal information. In order to assist the professors with their research as efficiently as possible, it is vital that the librarians keep apprised of software developments and that the library itself maintain an updated computer system. The library must remain open and accessible to its student population and must provide educational opportunities for students to hone their legal research skills.

### **Budget and /Staffing Issues**

The circulation desk is the first point of contact for visitors to the Library. Circulation desk staff members—typically students— answer general information questions about the Library and the campus; the desk itself is where patrons go to check out materials, access course reserves, and borrow study guides. The circulation desk is “the primary point of in-person library staff contact for most users who visit the Library, since it is highly visible (prominently located at the front entrance) and always staffed” (Pelczynski, 2012). As Henning suggests, this is typical of academic libraries, where student workers are most often the first library staff members encountered by visitors (Henning, 2000, p. 12).

Maintaining the circulation desk student staff requires a half-time staff including the librarian, who splits responsibilities between managing the circulation desk and working the reference desk. This librarian oversees the operations of the circulation desk and schedules and supervises a staff of student workers. At any given time, the librarian supervises between fifteen and twenty-five student workers. Hastings College is a stand-alone campus, and there is no undergraduate student base to hire from, so the student staff consists of graduate law students who are currently enrolled. All student workers are enrolled at Hastings. On evenings and

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weekends, the student workers are frequently the only employees, (other than security officers,) working in the Library (Pelczynski, 2012).

The Hastings Library is allowed to hire a certain number of Full-Time Exempt Employees (FTEs), but the number of positions that the Library is permitted to fill changes from time to time, and has recently diminished significantly. When an employee retires or quits, the Library submits a request for permission to fill the position, and this request must be approved by the Chief Financial Officer, as well as the Dean of the College. The Library's budget does not include dollar amounts for these FTEs; all funds for these positions come directly from the College, which manages the budget on a college-wide level. (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012.)

The number of FTEs available to the Hastings Library has been significantly reduced in recent years. In 2006, the Library had 23 FTEs. In 2010, the staff still included 22 FTEs. But after layoffs and early retirements, in June 2012 the number of FTEs was reduced to 15—a reduction of almost 35% over the past six years. (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012.)

In addition to full-time employees, the department employs student workers. Student workers are paid from several accounts. The largest amount comes from ACCT 5123 (regular student wages), which includes an estimated budget amount established at the beginning of the fiscal year. Other funding comes from ACCT 5125 (work study wages), ACCT 5127 (overtime), and ACCT 5133 (Graduate Research Fellows). The following table summarizes the amounts

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budgeted for regular student wages and the amount spent over the last three last fiscal years:

| Academic year | ACCT 5123<br>Budget | ACCT 5123<br>Expenditure | ACCT<br>5125/5127/<br>5133<br>Expenditures | Total student<br>wages |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 2009-2010     | 69085               | 49119                    | 11691                                      | 60810                  |
| 2010-2011     | 55190               | 20406                    | 19174                                      | 39580                  |
| 2011-2012     | 53482               | 43815                    | 8815                                       | 52630                  |

As these figures indicate, the amount budgeted for regular student wages has been reduced by 22.5% since 2009-10, and the amount actually spent on all student wages has been reduced in the same period by 13.5% (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012).

An important issue for the department is the hourly wage for circulation desk student workers. The current wage is \$11.19, which has remained stagnant for some time. While students working in other departments receive automatic pay increases when they transition from the second to the third year at the school, student workers in the Library do not receive these automatic pay increases, and it is not clear why this differentiation exists. The relatively poor wages of student workers in the Library have made it difficult to attract and retain student workers (Pelczynski, 2012).

Hastings' circulation department is currently exploring ways to streamline functions. Plans have been made for a more efficient way to handle materials held for faculty, and the department is ready to implement this new system. The department has also proposed the purchase of a new online payment system linked to Millennium. This system would automatically apply payments to Library patrons' records, with no need for human intervention. The request for funding to support this purchase has been included in the Library's budget request for 2012-13, but it is currently unclear whether the funding will be approved (Pelczynski, 2012).

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The budget issues faced by the Hastings College Library are common to academic libraries in a time of economic difficulty and tightening budgets. As Smith notes, all academic libraries are faced with the reality that higher education is in a period of great financial uncertainty, with increasing costs and shrinking government support (Smith, 2006, p. 2). Law libraries are especially affected by the dramatic changes in the ways in which legal information is available for researchers, and by the replacement of printed materials with digital collections (Fitchett, Hambleton, Hazelton, Klinefelter, & Wright, 2011, pp. 91-94).

The budgeting concerns faced by the library at Hasting College must also be seen within the context of the critical situation faced by the State of California and by the University of California. As announced on UC Newsroom, the university's web site for public affairs, in July 2012, the regents of the University of California endorsed the proposed state appropriation for 2012-13 and supported the revenue measure placed on the November 6 ballot by Governor Brown. In the event that this ballot measure does not succeed, the University of California will see the 2012-13 appropriation reduced by approximately \$250 million, and will lose a further \$124.5 million in state funds in the 2013-14 budget. Apart from the highly uncertain outcome of the November election, the University has made plans for reductions of \$1.5 billion in expenses over the next five years, requiring steps to make administration more efficient, and to reduce costs. (University of California, 2012a.).

The UC 2012-13 State Budget Request provides an illuminating overview of the budget realities facing all UC campuses (see Appendix A). Faced with the need to reduce costs, the budget request indicates that some of the anticipated savings include "deferral of library material purchases and equipment replacement" and "curtailing library hours" (University of California, 2011b, pp. S-8, S-14). For students, these measures will continue to result in "constrained



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library holdings and longer waits for library . . . services” (University of California, 2011b, p. S-17).

In 2011-12, the total budget of the UC libraries was \$259 million. UC library funding cuts have averaged approximately 20 since 2008-9, while the costs of library materials have continued to rise faster than the rate of inflation. Whereas over the past previous 25 years, the state has supported library development throughout the UC system, the past decade has seen a significant change, and the state has not been able to provide full funding to meet the increasing costs of maintaining the library systems. In the face of this challenge, “the libraries identified and developed strategies to reduce costs and promote broader and more efficient use of library resources;” and these strategies have included “reduced purchasing costs through interlibrary lending, lower capital costs resulting from use of shared offsite facilities, and savings from system-wide digital collections development and shared journal subscriptions” (University of California, 2011b, p.77). In order to continue to providing services while resources diminish, the university libraries—Hastings among them— have implemented strategies for coordinating and sharing resources, finding and delivering print and digital materials, interlibrary loans, Regional Library Facilities, and collaborations with other institutions that make it possible to reduce the cost of storage of materials..

In summary, the available budget information suggests that the Hastings College Library circulation department faces considerable financial challenges, including:

- Reduced funding for staff, including both full time employees and student workers. Uncertainty about the ability to fill vacant staff positions.
- Low and stagnant wages for student workers. Difficulty in attracting skilled student workers.

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- Uncertainty about the ability to invest in new technology to enable the department to serve students and faculty more efficiently and effectively.
- Diminished state support for the University of California and its libraries, with the presumption at the state level that this will result in deferral of material purchases and equipment replacement, curtailed service hours, and longer waits for library services.

The department's ability to meet these challenges will depend on a number of factors, many of them related to policy at the school and state levels.

### **Political Developments**

As a part of the University of California system, Hastings College depends to a considerable extent on funding from the State of California. The level of funding has declined over recent decades, and support depends on the condition of the state's economy and decisions made by the legislature and the governor. In 1980-81, UC received 5.09% of the state's general funds, but by 2011-12, this figure has declined to 2.76% in 2011-12. In 1990, state funding accounted for 78% of the cost of educating a student at UC, however, it now accounts for only 39%. The decrease in state funding has resulted in an increase in the students' share of costs from 13% in 1990, to 49% at present (University of California, 2011a).

Because it remains largely dependent on state funding, Hastings College and its library are affected by the current budget crisis facing the state. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) projects a shortfall of \$10 billion for the 2012-13 state budget, in addition to a \$3 billion deficit carried over from 2011-12. Assuming that there are no significant positive developments in the state's fiscal position, and that no corrective actions are taken by the state, the LAO estimates that the University of California will have to accept "trigger" cuts of \$100 million in every fiscal year through 2016-17 (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2011, p. 5).

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Avoidance of these trigger cuts will depend on whether the people of California approve one of several competing initiatives on the November 6, 2012 ballot. Proposition 30 is the initiative proposed by Governor Jerry Brown, and supported by the Regents of the University of California. It would increase the state sales and use tax by a quarter-cent for four years, and it would increase personal income tax rates on incomes over \$250,000 for seven years. The direct impact of the proposition failing is mainly negative: in the case that it does not pass, the state will enact a trigger cut of \$250 million, and UC would will not receive a tuition increase buyout of \$125.4 million, meaning that the total loss of revenue to UC could reach \$375.4 million. If Proposition 30 does pass, it is expected to help the state to meet its structural deficit, and allow the state to avoid these trigger cuts. It would also allow for the implementation of a funding agreement between the state and the UC system that would provide increases of 6% annually through 2016-17, providing the university with some stability and predictability (University of California, 2012b, paras. 3-4).

Additionally, there are two competing tax initiatives on the November 2012 ballot. Proposition 38 (Munger) would increase the personal income tax on all but the lowest income levels through 2024. It would designate the revenues raised for K-12 education and servicing the State debt, and it would not allocate any additional funds for higher education. Proposition 39 would increase taxes on multi-state corporations that do business in California. It does not address specific issues in education funding. (Field Poll, 2012, p. 2.).

The fate of these competing initiatives remains uncertain. According to the Field Poll, as of September 20<sup>th</sup>, Proposition 30 (Brown) had the support of 51% of the voters surveyed, but this figure reflected a decline from 54% in July 2012. 36% of voters surveyed declared themselves opposed to the initiative (down from 38% in July), while the number of undecided

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voters was 13%—an increase from the 8% who were undecided in July. Proposition 38 (Munger) had considerably less support, with 41% supporting and 44% opposed, with 15% undecided (Field Poll, 2012, p.3). These political polls demonstrate the fickle future Hastings Library and other public universities must address in their organizational planning.

In summary, the evidence suggests that Hastings College and its library face financial issues that depend on political issues which are beyond local control, especially:

- A continuing trend of reduced public funding in the State of California.
- Uncertainty about the outcome of the November 6, 2012 election.
- Possible severe budget reductions in the event that Proposition 30 does not pass.

### **Technological Developments**

The Integrated Library System (ILS) was developed in the 1980s to combine services for circulation, serials, acquisitions, cataloging, online cataloging, and collection management (Rubin, 2010, p. 232). ILS improves library efficiency by centralizing and sometimes automating library tasks, as well as sharing bibliographic resources. Additionally, libraries are able to outsource the technical management of their systems to a third party with industry expertise. Over the past thirty years, ILS has kept pace with technology, adding services for OPACs, interlibrary loans, electronic resources, online courses, etc. Today, the hype of Web 2.0 and user interaction, drives ILS innovation.

The Hastings College of Law Library uses an ILS from Innovative Interfaces called Millennium, which provides a variety of “multi-tiered” services to handle different aspects of the library work-flow. According to the Innovative Interfaces website (2012), “Circulation”—one of the add-on modules available for Millennium—“frees staff from unnecessary tasks and

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provides patrons with a host of self-service options,” Some of Circulation’s functions include checking materials in and out, ILL requests, and holds. “Serials,” which was originally developed for law libraries, manages journals and other serial publications, including online editions. “Acquisitions” handles new materials, work orders, and invoicing. Libraries can personalize metadata schemes and maintain an updated collections database with “Cataloguing.” All of Millennium’s modules streamline together and can each provide statistics for in-house analysis. (Innovative Interfaces, 2012.)

Aside from traditional ILS services, Millennium also offers another tier of modules designed to increase library efficiency. “Patron Services” allows users to manage their own library account. Universities that wish to standardize their system-wide interface may choose to implement “Campus Computing,” which can deal with administrative functions, online courses, etc. Libraries that use Radio Frequency Identification tags (RFID) to manage their circulation can integrate this process into their ILS using “Circa.” RFID is an alternative to bar codes, and allows circulation departments to scan an entire shelf of materials at the same time, rather than one by one. Although the cost of entry for RFID can be prohibitive, certain libraries find that the time saving allowed by the system makes up for the initial cost (Innovative Interfaces, 2012). The Hastings Library uses barcodes, and has not made any decision to switch to RFID in the near future (Interview with Tony Pelczynski, (personal communication, October 11, 2012).

A third tier of services that Innovative Interfaces offers deals with OPACs and the user search interface. In an effort to bring Web 2.0 concepts to libraries, Innovative Interfaces designed Encore Synergy, a “discovery system” that integrates with Millennium, but may also be used with other ILS. While Millennium provides the facilities to check in and out books, order new subscriptions, and manage user accounts, Encore Synergy is the interface that allows users

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to search for and discover new materials. The latest version includes search features such as faceted results, tag clouds, “Did you mean...?” suggestions, popular choices, and community interaction through tagging, “liking,” etc. These features are an effort to create an interface familiar to users of Google or other online search engines, yet richer in features and tied to library-specific resources. Encore Synergy can search a variety of available materials, from books, to journals, to specialized digital collections. It can also provide access to course reserves (Innovative Interfaces, 2012). Encore accomplishes its goal of usability. In her review of Encore at the University of Glasgow, Stevenson (2009) notes that students don’t have to choose an index to search first (p. 68), and that almost all undergraduates rated Encore “very easy” or “relatively easy” to use (p. 69).

In December, 2011, the Hastings Library began using Encore Synergy. (Encore for Libraries, 2011). Encore Synergy integrates “articles from ProQuest®, Google Scholar™, and HeinOnline’s™ Core Collections that comprise more than 40 million pages of legal history, including more than 1,500 law and related periodicals” (Innovative Interfaces, 2011, para. 1). This allows Hastings patrons to access a huge variety of materials from a single search box. In addition, Hastings technical librarian Marlene Bubrick explains that while faculty often have specific search needs, “students generally want a broader view of ‘what exists out there’ in terms of a particular subject. Keyword searching is the route students take and the new advanced search is a great tool for librarians. For all our users, faceting helps them drill down to what they need” (Innovative Interfaces, 2011, para. 3). The benefits of Encore Synergy make it an invaluable tool for libraries competing in this increasingly online world, particularly in an academic setting.

Overall, Millennium with Encore Synergy is a current, respected, and widely-used ILS

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that provides the Hastings Library with a solid foundation for managing their circulation. Add-ons and updates offer increased services, which may or may not benefit the library's patrons and should be assessed individually.

### **SWOT Analysis**

#### **Strengths**

Although Hastings College is a member of the UC system, it receives its funding directly from the state rather than from the board of UC regents. This gives Hastings considerable freedom in designing their curriculum and controlling their budget; they do not need to justify every expense to the regents, nor do they need to compete for scarce resources to the same extent as other campuses. While Hastings is still dependent on the regents and the State of California, and has been greatly impacted by the California budget crisis, their situation is not as dire as some of the other campuses. (AllGov California, 2012).

The Hastings' Law Library's circulation department is staffed almost entirely by part-time, temporary, student workers who have been hired through the Federal Work Study Program (FWS). Although students earn \$11.19 per hour, the majority of their salary is paid through FWS program funds. The library is only responsible for paying a very small percentage of the FWS student salaries, so hiring student workers is extremely cost-effective and costs the library a fraction of what it would spend on non-federally funded, part-time workers (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012).

Hastings is a stand-alone campus with no undergraduates. The library only hires students who are currently attending the university. As they are already law students, these workers have a more immediate, intimate understanding of the library processes than would non-law students. Due to the fact that they are only allowed to work in the library after the completion of their first

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year, student library workers have effectively had one year to become familiar with the basic structure of the library prior to being hired (Pelczynski, 2012).

The law library has been keeping very up-to-date with its circulation and computer systems. As of September, 2012, it was authorized to update its circulation system to the Innovative Interfaces' Sierra platform. Innovative Interfaces has slowed down on the development of Millennium (Hastings' current platform) and has been focusing on expanding and developing Sierra (Library Technology Guides, 2011). The Sierra platform is open source and is designed to be more flexible than the company's previous platforms; it should help in keeping the Hastings computer services vital and up-to-date (INN Touch, 2011. "Sierra Services Platform: An Introduction").

### **Weaknesses**

Despite Hastings' relative independence, the California State budget crisis has resulted in extensive cuts to the college's budget, which has greatly impacted the law library and its circulation department. Prior to the cuts, the staff circulation department was made up of at least two full-time circulation librarians, who supervised approximately 40 student workers. In scheduling, the librarians always ensured that at least two student workers were stationed at the main circulation desk at any one time in order to accommodate the influx of users. The two circulation librarians were able to share the responsibilities of the department and the bureaucratic managerial duties involved with hiring, training, and supervising the students (Pelczynski, 2012).

In the past five years the circulation department has been cut back to one half-time circulation librarian and 15 – 20 student workers (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012). Although the student workers are a source of cheap labor for the library,



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there are drawbacks to relying too heavily on them. Student workers are only allowed to work in the library during their second and third years of law school. Although initially this creates the benefits described above, it means that at the end of every year, half of the experienced workforce graduates and new workers must be scouted, then hired and trained at the beginning of the next fall term. This responsibility falls completely on the shoulders of the half-time circulation librarian. The staffing shortfall has created a situation in which a highly trained, well-paid employee—the circulation librarian—is spending a large amount of his time managing, training and processing part time temporary staff rather than attending to his librarian duties. The job has become mainly a managerial rather than librarian position (Pelczynski, 2012).

Although the student workers save the library money, their hourly wage—\$11.19 per hour—has not changed for several years. Their low wage provides very little incentive for students to commit to their schedules and follow through with their work duties. Absenteeism is common, particularly on the weekends and during final examination periods. The responsibility for this absenteeism again falls on the circulation librarian (Pelczynski, 2012).

### **Technological Weaknesses**

The Hastings' library's main technological weaknesses are, unfortunately, problems endemic to the university as a whole. The library will be unable to solve these problems without cooperation from the university itself (Pelczynski, 2012).

The circulation department's technology fails primarily in the manner it processes student worker's paperwork and records their time each day. The time clock through which the students record their work hours is an antiquated "punch-card" system. The time keeping system is confusing and the text is small. The times themselves print on the card as units of 100 rather than 60. Every two weeks the circulation librarian must manually go through the students' time card

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and re-check their math to ensure the hours are correct (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012). This process takes a considerable amount of time and prevents the librarian from attending to other duties.

The student workers' main accounts are not connected to the library's system so the circulation librarian must manually process all the paperwork connected to the work-study students and physically walk the paperwork and all the time-cards over to the appropriate offices. Although this, in itself, may seem a small matter, it is yet another time wasting activity that keeps the librarian away from more pertinent activities (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012).

It would be helpful if the Hastings' library computer were able to communicate with the main university student database; it would also be more efficient for the school to update its student time-keeping system. Unfortunately, this is a problem over which the library has little control; it is unlikely that the circulation department will become more efficient in this area unless the university itself changes (Pelczynski, 2012).

### **Opportunities**

The pressure of the current budget situation provides the library and the circulation departments the opportunity to rethink their mission and adopt policies and procedures in order to improve services to the library community. With the budget crisis, the library has the opportunity to explore the current trends of the academic circulation departments described in this report's literature review section. Specifically, Hastings may want to consider hiring a non-librarian "access person" responsible for day-to-day management of the student workforce. A designated access person would not necessarily have to be a trained librarian, and would command a much lower salary than would a new librarian. An access person could take much of the non-librarian

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duties off of the circulation librarian's plate, for less money.

As stated above, Hastings has recently approved the library's purchase of an upgrade to the circulation's computer system. The system, Illustrated Interfaces' Sierra, is scheduled to be put in place for the 2013 – 2014 school years. This upgraded system should make the department more efficient and should provide increased training opportunities for student workers.

### **Threats**

The primary threat facing the Hastings library is the continued budget crisis in California. With increasing university costs and decreasing government support, academic libraries are in a period of great financial uncertainty (Smith, 2006). Over the past decade, law libraries have been weighing the costs of maintaining their traditional print editions of state and federal court reporters (printings of judicial opinions) in the face of increasing dependence on internet databases (Library of Congress, 2012). Bound volumes of judicial opinions are expensive, and because they are updated constantly, take up valuable shelf space, while many courts offer free and up-to-the minute public access to those same opinions. Many courts, however, do not publish their opinions online so users may get a false sense of the current law, and not realize that their information is incomplete. Most of the legal databases do not provide free access, and are prohibitively expensive. Moreover, there has been no consensus on the proper method of citing on-line sources—bound volumes are still the authoritative standard (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012), (Library of Congress, 2012). Hastings has recently gotten rid of many of its older bound legal volumes, and now gets the majority of its law journal subscriptions on-line (V. Moyer, personal communication, September 24, 2012). As budget cuts continue to stress the library's system, it will be forced to continuously weigh the costs of keeping its print collection against the limitations of online access.

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In November, 2012, Californians will vote on “The Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act of 2012” (Proposition 30), the passage or non-passage of which will have a tremendous impact on the University of California. The initiative, placed on the ballot by Governor Jerry Brown, will raise the state’s sales tax by a quarter-cent for the next four years and increase personal income taxes on incomes greater than \$250,000 for seven years. If the initiative does not pass, the UC system will lose a total of \$375 million, including an immediate cut of \$250 million and the loss of an additional \$125 million in funding for the 2013–14 school year (University of California, 2012). Regardless of the election results, the University has made plans to reduce expenses by \$1.5 billion over the next five years (University of California, 2012). This will doubtlessly lead to further cuts to the all the UC campuses and increased strain on the libraries. (see Political Developments, above).

### **Conclusion**

We began our process by reviewing the relevant literature on the role of an academic circulation department, reviewing the trends in the development of academic law libraries, and researching the budgetary landscape of the University of California in general, and Hastings in particular. The budgetary landscape for Hastings informed our recommendations, as well as the trends observed in other law libraries. We have conducted a thorough environmental scan and SWOT analysis of the UC Hastings Law Library's circulation department. These analyses are thoroughly supported by the information we received from our contacts with the Hastings Law Library, and by the relevant literature. Our recommendations should provide a foundation for Hastings to make decisions about the development of their circulation department.

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## Appendix A University of California Library Expenditures, 2010-11

### UC 2010-11 Library Expenditures by Fund Source:

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| General Fund     | 56% |
| Student fees     | 9%  |
| Other/Restricted | 35% |

### UC 2010-11 Library Expenditures by Category:

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Library Collection      | 33% |
| Staff salaries          | 29% |
| Academic salaries       | 14% |
| Benefits                | 13% |
| Other library materials | 11% |

(University of California, 2011b, p. 76.)