

King County Law Library

2002-2006 Strategic Directions

Envisioning the Future

Adopted 07.12.2002

Updated 01.17.07

Introduction

For the past year, we have been reviewing the library's operations and preparing our next four-year operating plan. The plan below was developed through a variety of strategies.

The key to being relevant to our users rests in our ability to be futurists and visionaries. We need to be able to imagine what the future holds for our library and to position ourselves for success in this future. Ultimately, we want to control our institution's destiny.

Methodology

To create a map to our future, we researched and discussed the answers to four critical questions.

- Who are we as an institution?
- Where do we want to go as an institution?
- What do we recognize as our own seminal moments as a public law library?
- How can we develop the institutional attitude of insurgency needed to face an uncertain future?

As a first step, Board and staff members brainstormed responses to the following:

- We froze our library at this precise moment in time and listed all of the things we are—not yesterday or tomorrow, but right now. This list became our benchmark against which to measure future change.
- We declared a major in our future by listing all the things our library will be. This is the reality we hope to invent.
- We list our postulates about the future of our library. This will be a list of things that have to be true for us to be what we will be.
- Finally, we listed all of the things that mark us as a radical institution among our peers.

Both Board and staff members reviewed and discussed an article by Georgetown University Law School professor Diana Donahoe, "Bridging the Digital Divide between Law Professor and Law Student" to provide a framework for our conversation about the emerging trends in the practice of law and legal research. The librarian met individually with each Trustee to discuss their perspectives about the challenges and opportunities ahead for our library.

Finally, the library commissioned a focus group study to sample and to collect the opinions of library patrons regarding their current and future research needs. Three different focus groups met with a facilitator to discuss their use of the library's collection and services. The information collected through this activity helped shape the critical goals that form the framework for this plan.

At their January 16, 2002 meeting the Board identified the purposes we expect the plan to serve. The plan must have practical goals. The plan must chart the directions that our institution should travel. The plan should be mindful of the rapid pace of change in legal information creation, presentation and preservation. The plan should be mindful of the rapid pace of change in research methodology employed by the diverse segments of the library's user population. The plan must position the library to address challenges facing aspects of the library's operation. The plan will serve as an expression of the institution's priorities, and will guide the staff as they develop projects to implement plan goals. Finally, the plan must provide a framework for decision-making in all aspects of the operation including

budgeting and revenue generation; staff recruitment, development and retention; collection building and preservation; program and service development, and facility planing.

Within that framework of review, the Board and staff stepped off into the future and articulated the three major goals and the supporting initiatives for the plan.

Goals

- **Ensure the viability of the library as a community resource for legal information**
- **Position the library to advance open access to legal information**
- **Strengthen ties with the library's community of users**

Initiatives

Goal #1

The first goal focuses on the library's internal operations:

- *Ensure the viability of the library as a community resource for legal information*

This broad goal provides an umbrella for projects that address budgeting, funding and the financial stability of the library; staff recruitment, development, compensation and retention; facilities modernization; technology planning, and legislative planning.

Initiatives

Undertake efforts to collaborate with local and state government to secure stable funding sources

- Secured financial support from the King County Library System for the Regional Justice Center library collection in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005.
- Secured funding for the Regional Justice Center library operation from King County as a part of the County's Current Expense Budgeting process in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.
- Worked with King County government relations staff, local and state Bar Associations, and a wide coalition of supporters within the statewide legal community to secure amendment of the county law library statute to provide for a local option filing fee in the 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 Legislative sessions.
- Worked to support the passage of SB5454, the "Justice in Jeopardy" bill, which allowed for an increase in civil filing fees for county law libraries.
- Worked with King County government staff to create an ordinance which moves the funding level for the Library to the \$20.00 level beginning in 2006.

Secure grants to further institutional goals

- Implemented a Community Access to Technology Grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to open the Legal Research and Training Center in the Seattle library in 2002.
- Implemented a Library Services and Technology Grant from the Washington State Library to support the creation of a community network to provide email and chat reference services with Seattle Public Library, and the UW Health Sciences Library in 2003.
- Expanded the community network of providers of email and chat reference services by adding the Washington State Law Library and the Miller Horticultural Library with funding from a second Library Services and Technology Grant from the Washington State Library in 2004.
- Secured grant funding for staff training from the Washington State Law Library in 2002, 2003, and 2004.

Initiate a program to refurbish the Seattle library

- Developed a plan to refurbish the Seattle library as a part of the County's Courthouse seismic renovation project in 2003.
- Implemented the plan to refurbish the Seattle library in collaboration with the Department of Facilities Management in 2004.
- Funded the renovation plan through the development of a capital campaign called the 85th Anniversary Campaign that raised over \$55,000.00 from members of the Library's subscriber program in 2004.
- Secured placement of art from the County's traveling art program in the Seattle library in 2004.

Create and implement a disaster plan for the library detailing procedures to prepare for and respond to events such as earthquakes, fires and floods

- Gathered information to serve as the foundation for the plan in 2004.
- Prepared Disaster and Recovery Plan that was approved by the Board in September 2006.

Coordinate the development and implementation of a library relocation operation plan with the Courthouse Seismic Renovation Project Team

- Developed the relocation plan in 2002, moved the library to the County Administration Building in March of 2003, and returned the library to the Courthouse in September of 2004.
- Developed and operated a small satellite library, KCLL Express, in the Courthouse during the period of the main library's relocation to the Administration building in 2003 and 2004.

Goal #2

The second goal covers the library's collection resources:

- ***Position the library to advance open access to legal information***

Under this broad goal fall projects that expand the range of electronic resources available to in-library and remote users, projects that explore the use of the library's web page as a linking mechanism for web based collection resources, and projects based in the training center to foster information literacy.

Initiatives

Create and implement a technology plan

- Prepared a draft plan in 2004.
- Adopted the plan in February of 2005.

Implement virtual reference services

- Began offering email reference in 2002 using a software program designed by library staff.
- Secured grant funding to purchase OCLC's Question Point virtual reference software in collaboration with Seattle Public Library and UW Health Sciences Library in 2003.
- Trained staff to provide email and chat using the Question Point system 2003.
- Broadened the collaborative group by adding the Washington State Law Library and the Miller Horticultural Library.
- Participated in two different pilot projects under the auspices of the Washington State Library's Virtual Reference Steering committee's leadership to evaluate our virtual reference service in 2003 and 2004. The library director has serviced as a member of 6 person Statewide Virtual

Reference Steering committee since 2002; Reference Services Librarian served on Steering Committee beginning in 2005.

- In Spring 2006 King County Law Library and the State Law Library offered a combined service administered by a librarian from the King County Law Library

Meet the legal research needs of special populations

- Tested screen reading capability and voice activation software on one of the LRTC workstations in 2002.
- Implemented podcast (downloadable audio programs) to disseminate legal research information for auditory learners in 2006.

Integrate the training center into all aspects of library operations

- Joined all public workstations in a network for printing documents in 2003.
- Integrated research tools created for the LRTC into the www.kcell.org web site in 2003.
- Piloted and installed time-out software in the LRTC in 2004.
- Reconfigured the network setup for Seattle public PCs in 2004 and for Kent PCs in 2005
- Upgraded all public PC monitors to more energy-efficient and better-quality LCD panels

Develop curriculum and training materials for self-represented litigants and other segments of our diverse patron base

- Created intranet for LRTC to act as research platform for self-represented litigants in 2002.
- Implemented a monthly training calendar and posted the calendar in the library and on the web site in 2003.
- Designed a “how to use...” PowerPoint tool for the web site that helps nonlawyers begin their research using the library’s research links and guides in 2004.
- Developed training program for Seattle Public Library staff in 2002 and 2005.
- Provided specialized training for KCBA practice areas in 2003.
- Offered special training on legislative history resources for the KC Prosecutor’s office and the KCBA Bar legislative committee in 2004 and 2005.
- Offered individual Lexis training for judicial officers in 2005 and will continue to do so in 2006.
- Provided training sessions for Highline Community College Paralegal program in 2004, 2005 and 2006.
- Participated with Seattle Public Library in the development of an orientation for members of PSACT, the Puget Sound Area Community Technology centers in 2004.
- Presented programs to law librarianship students at the University of Washington in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.
- Presented a program to train public librarians through the support of the Washington State Library in an online format in 2005 and 2006.
- Presented a program about legal research sources for legal secretaries through the National Association of Legal Secretaries in 2006.
- Presented a program about legal research sources for the King County Bar Association Family Guardian Ad Litem training in 2006.

Market targeted training sessions for specific audiences

- Promoted monthly training sessions for KCBA members through Bar Bulletin column in 2002 - 2006.
- Promoted Ethics CLE in KCBA Bar Bulletin and SCKBA newsletter in 2002, 2003, and 2004.

- Added book note and web research notes as separate features of the Bar Bulletin column to raise awareness in 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2006.

Create and implement a collection development policy

- Drafted and adopted by the Board in 2003.

Preserve archival resources

- Sent staff to training programs sponsored by the Washington State Library and by our bibliographic utility OCLC to gain expertise in this area in 2003 and 2004.

Expand online public access subscriptions

- Added subscriptions to Westlaw in 2003.
- Added subscriptions to Hein Online in 2004.
- Added subscription to Westlaw for the RJC in 2005.
- Expanded Westlaw subscription to include Law Reviews, and Federal and State Administrative materials in 2005.
- Expanded Westlaw subscription for Seattle and Kent to include analytical sources.

Goal #3

The third goal addresses the library's service and program development component:

- *Strengthen ties with the library's community of users*

Under this broad goal could fall such projects as the development of a comprehensive public relations/marketing plan, the creation of targeted programs for individual segments of the user population, and the initiation of collaborative projects for programming in the training center.

Initiatives

Create and implement a public relations plan

- Adopted an image for the website and tag line in 2003.
- Overhauled the library's web site in 2003.
- Collected resources and sent staff to training in preparation for drafting a plan in 2004.
- Adopted a Public Outreach Plan in May of 2005.

Publish an electronic newsletter

- Began publication of a quarterly electronic newsletter for Subscribers in 2002.
- Added newsletter to web site in 2003 so that audience broadens.

Review opportunities to provide services to the Eastside and other under-served areas of the county

Identify places in courthouse where the library could have a presence

- Maintained KCLL Express in 2003 and 2004 to provide access to vital information sources in the courthouse during the Seattle library's relocation to the Administration building.
- Created Public Services brochure and started stocking the brochure in individual courtrooms in Seattle and the RJC.

Host specific legal events and programs in the library

- Held community Open House for the LRTC in 2002 for community partners.
- Held events in April each year in both libraries to celebrate National Library Week.
- Hosted Open House for 85th Anniversary Campaign donors in 2004.

- Offered the library as a site for reception that will be a part of the ceremony to acknowledge the construction work on the courthouse entrances in January of 2005.
- Hosted an Open House to honor the outgoing Library director, Jean Holcomb.
- Reference service librarians provided online training for the Washington Library Association in 2005.
- Host a weekly KCBA Neighborhood Clinic beginning in 2006 in the Seattle library.
- Host a weekly KCBA Housing Justice Clinic beginning in 2006 in the Seattle library.

Expand CLE offerings

- Offered Ethics CLE multiple times in November and December in 2002, 2003 and 2004.
- Offered Library Orientation CLE in May of 2006