Library Teaching and Information Services Department Program Review
Dean's Response

January 4, 2021

I thank the Teaching and Information Services (TIS) Department in engaging in their first ever program review as well as the insights of the review team (Louise Molding, Richard Price, Melissa Bowles-Terry, and Kacy Lundstrom).

Upon reading the Review Team Report and the department's response, I concur with the review team that the Teaching and Information Services department meets university standards, particularly in the commitment of faculty to student learning and success. I also agree that the department's central challenges are related to long-term sustainability and the lack of a clear mission or vision for information literacy (IL) education at WSU. I agree with much of the department's response, with a few areas of concern and clarification outlined below.

Mission:
I agree with both the review team and the department response of the need for a mission statement that clearly outlines the role of the library in information literacy education that goes beyond the credit course alone. The credit course is a particular instructional delivery model, not an end in itself. A clear mission statement will serve as a touchstone for the department as it works on the challenge of clarifying the IL curriculum. Decisions about the future need to be made on the basis of how it advances the department's mission.

Curriculum:
I concur with the review team and the department that they have developed a good curriculum for LIBS 1704, based on national standards. I also agree with the review team that the curriculum delivery is confusing. The various 2000-level disciplinary course options do provide different paths for students, as the department response suggest, but the multiple options doesn't address the larger issue raised by the review team. The credit courses in the disciplines are designed to meet both general education outcomes and disciplinary ones. But the model of delivery (the mix of different credit courses) cannot currently meet the demand for both. The discipline specific courses have capacity for, at most, a little more than 200 seats per year. Some discipline-specific courses offer only 70-100 seats per year. If discipline-specific IL instruction is a priority for some academic programs, this delivery model cannot meet the demand of programs that enroll significantly more students than this per year. This is not a question of providing multiple paths, but whether the TIS department can find a sustainable way to provide meaningful,

integrated disciplinary information literacy instruction to *all* students enrolled in a degree program.

I also encourage the department to clarify accreditation requirements. I cannot find any requirements for a credit-bearing information literacy course from a brief scan of the documents from various accrediting organizations. Most of our peer institutions do not offer credit-bearing IL courses for accredited programs, such as nursing and business. Information literacy, *as a learning outcome,* is an important accreditation issue in some programs. I understand that TIS faculty are responding to departmental urgency and historical expectations in offering subject-specific IL courses. I recommend that the issue of accreditation be explored more fully between departmental faculty and TIS faculty because the use of credit courses to meet both general and disciplinary information literacy goals seems both unsustainable and isn't articulated as part of a larger IL education plan or strategy.

The solution to the tension between general and subject-specific IL education is a more consistent vision for what information literacy looks like across the curriculum. The intensity of the general education credit course model means that many students don't receive in-depth, integrated information literacy instruction in their majors. Subject librarians do teach valuable workshops and one-shot instruction sessions in many disciplines. Integrating these kinds of sessions requires a significant amount of work and collaboration with disciplinary faculty, and when they compete with the teaching demands of LIBS 1704, they cannot scale to meet the demand. Trying to get them to scale risks serious faculty burn out.

I encourage the TIS Department to better define their goals for information literacy across the curriculum so that they can make the necessary trade-offs between general and discipline-specific approaches. This requires curriculum analysis and mapping to identify the courses and sequence of instruction (introduction, applied practice, and mastery) in diverse programs of study and disciplines. The TIS Department will benefit from clarifying its vision and developing priorities for addressing general education and discipline specific goals in a way that is effective for achieving student learning outcomes with sustainable and equitable faculty workloads.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment:
I concur with the review team that the assessment of student learning outcomes is in early stages, with small pilots and conversations. I am less concerned about the lack of specific plan to address the learning outcome for *Standard B: Find Information Effectively: Demonstrate how information is organized; use Boolean Logic and other search strategies to effectively use library catalogs, article databases, and Internet search engines.* The standard is no longer a learning outcome with the revision of the outcomes to align with the ACRL Information Literacy Framework. My interpretation is that the consistent underperformance is an artifact of the assessment instrument, the pre-/post-test, which the department has also stopped using. The department response does include some general plans for doing more authentic assessment of student work products and using student reflection, which I applaud.

I encourage the department to make assessment a key part of the overall curricular planning project recommended above. Assessment of student learning outcomes is required to know whether or not a particular model or approach is working or not. There is some data that students achieve most of the learning goals in LIBS 1704 and discipline-specific IL courses within their courses. But given the challenges of sustainability and the need to set priorities, the department needs to know more about whether students can apply that learning to other courses and to their degree program learning goals. There is some anecdotal and small-scale evidence that the integrated ENGL 2010/LIBS 1704 approach, even in its earliest and least developed stages, led to better ENGL 2010 learning outcomes, with stronger use of higher quality evidence in persuasive research papers. This is a good place for the department to start the work on assessment that they outlined in their response. I can support outside consultants and some release time (see below) to develop and implement a new assessment approach.

Advising:
Advising has vastly improved with the commendable efforts of the Information Literacy Exam Coordinator, even if there is no formal department advisor. The department has done an excellent job rethinking this position so that is supports advising and concurrent enrollment course support, rather than focusing on the LIBS 1504 test option. The future of the test as a path towards meeting the information literacy requirement should be reconsidered, given the low pass rate. It might actually be creating greater bottlenecks for LIBS 1704, as well as barriers for underserved students, because students pay for a credit hour to take the test and then still need to take the course if they cannot pass the test.

Faculty:
The review team expressed uncertainty over whether hiring of more adjuncts and/or tenure track faculty would alleviate enrollment pressures. The waitlist has declined significantly, and concurrent enrollment might ease demand in the near future. But there are still high numbers of graduating seniors who take LIBS 1704 in their final semester and a waitlist that consistently approaches between 150 to 200 each semester. Reducing the backlog of demand and ensuring that students can take LIBS 1704 early in their coursework likely requires increasing capacity in LIBS 1704 by 150-300 per semester.

There are no easy solutions to this. The possibilities include:

- Hire more adjuncts. This option is limited by the local supply, since we cannot hire adjuncts from out of state, even to teach online courses. The department response correctly noted that we have hired 5 new adjuncts, but it is unclear if we can hire many more beyond this. Furthermore, there is the issue of adjuncts teaching the majority of LIBS 1704 courses. In Fall 2020, adjuncts taught approximately 45% of the LIBS 1704 credit hours. Some of these adjuncts are library staff with the Master of Library Science credential, which raises pay equity issues.
- Hire an additional tenure track librarian. This would require significant investment by the university, which is unlikely given the need for additional faculty in several

degree programs. Given current teaching loads, it would require two additional faculty to address the typical wait list for LIBS 1704.

- Increase faculty teaching loads by an average of one course per faculty. This is not an option without faculty letting go of other responsibilities in collection management, affordable course materials, and faculty and student research support. This would impact the library's ability to meet other urgent priorities, as well as potentially isolate library faculty in the TIS Department from the larger work of the library.
- Hire an additional fulltime library instructor (not tenure track) to teach a 4:4 teaching load. This solution raises pay equity issues with instructors across the university, who teach 12 credit hours per semester (four 3-credit courses). A library instructor with a 4:4 load would teach only 4 credit hours per semester of LIBS 1704. Balancing a living wage, high quality teaching, and equitable teaching loads is a challenge for a library instructor model.

Some combination of these options might address the short-term demand for LIBS 1704, but I agree with the review team that it isn't clear that this would address sustainability issues in the long term. These solutions do not free up any time for TIS Department faculty to expand IL instruction in the disciplines or address serious burn out issues that they are currently facing. Again, a clear mission and curricular plan, based on student learning outcomes, would help guide the department to a more enduring solution and a means to assess its efficacy beyond increasing LIBS 1704 enrollment numbers.

Program Support:
While the review team found the program had adequate administrative support, some TIS members suggest that the department needs an administrative assistant to support their work. I will explore ways to redistribute work within the Library Administration office to free up time for greater support, and explore options for part-time or shared administrative support across the library in the next budget cycle.

Review team recommendations:
I concur with the review team and the department response for the need to go slowly, or more accurately, focus on the larger questions at hand about mission and curricular goals in a deeper way. The achievements in reducing the waitlist, implementing a concurrent enrollment option, and piloting an integrated ENGL 2010/LIBS 1704 option have happened quickly. I commend the TIS department for their work in a stressful environment caused by enrollment pressures and the size of the LIBS 1704 backlog, the timing of the curriculum approval process, the shift to remote learning in a pandemic, and the challenges of instituting library-wide change with a new dean. Addressing the most acute enrollment issues might provide the opportunity to slow down and look at the information literacy program more holistically.

I encourage the department to spend the next 18-24 months developing a mission statement and curricular plan that addresses the trade-offs required to meet a balance of general education and subject-specific information literacy outcomes. A clear mission and

curricular plan is essential for being able to evaluate any proposed staffing changes or resource requests so that they can be measured against how it helps enact the department's overall vision of information literacy across the curriculum. These touchstones can also be used to evaluate how information literacy can be shared with disciplinary faculty, including in an integrated ENGL 2010/LIBS 1704 course, in order to build a more sustainable program.

I can commit funding for outside consultants and professional development in this area. I can also commit funding for hiring some adjuncts, if and when they are available, so that select library faculty get release time for curriculum planning work. I encourage TIS faculty to be mindful of pay equity issues, especially with library staff who teach as adjuncts.

I can also commit to a moratorium on new initiatives that require significant library faculty involvement. This does require some trade-offs because there are urgent issues related to affordability and equity that cannot wait. This will require careful consideration of what role faculty can and will take in affordable course materials initiatives, the future of collection management, and the migration to a new integrated library system and improvements in the library's website usability.

I recommend that TIS develop a list of priorities for any special projects outside of the information literacy curriculum and propose a strategy for delegating this work equitably across the department. While the work of developing a mission statement and curricular plan requires the buy-in of all department members, I encourage the department to carefully assign responsibility for developing plans and proposals, and for piloting the integrated ENGL 2010/LIBS 1704 course. Relying on one or two pilot projects, with sharing of lessons learned, can alleviate the pressure for everyone to innovate at once. Some faculty might need to take on a heavier teaching load (as compensated overload/summer teaching) to create space for others to do the pilot and development work. Both of these contributions are equally valued. It will require trust and an equitable reward model to divide the work between those sustaining the existing teaching load/model and those developing and piloting new approaches.

Faculty identity:
Finally, I would like to clarify what I see as the difference between what the review team and the TIS Department discussed in relation to library faculty identity. While the review team was focused on the department's teaching activities, which is only part of library faculty's responsibilities, I suspect that they were reacting to a strong attachment to the credit-bearing course model as the primary means of fulfilling a faculty role at WSU. The department response to the idea of a "confusing curriculum" implies that credit bearing courses are the preferred option for teaching information literacy in an ideal staffing situation, as in the example about courses in the Arts and Humanities. The department response says that teaching 8 courses in all of the Arts and Humanities disciplines is impossible because of staffing constraints, even though a social science course is taught in a college with as many disparate disciplines (e.g. social work and philosophy). The question about the decision to offer credit courses in some colleges and a combination of LIBS 1704

(including one integrated with ENGL 2010) and one-shot workshops in other colleges is left unanswered from a curricular and learning outcomes perspective.

I encourage the TIS Department to be mindful of their assumptions about credit-bearing courses. Credit bearing courses and information literacy education are not inextricably linked at other institutions. Indeed, non-credit bearing options are working here at WSU in many disciplines, through one-shot sessions and research consultations. Being open to all possibilities will make it easier to develop a more sustainable approach to providing a rich and meaningful information literacy education for all WSU students.

Indeed, the department response suggests that they do not want to be the "keepers of information literacy." I applaud that sentiment and am committed to helping the department figure out what that means for the future by setting realistic goals (slow, deliberate, limit extra commitments), providing support (compensation, release time, administrative support, outside consultants, professional development), and also by pushing department members to critically reflect on their assumptions and clarify their goals for student learning. This is challenging work, and I commend the department for opening itself up to the kind of hard questions that this program review raises.

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Dean of the Library