Aligning Library Services with Campus Strategic Visions: A Case of Experiential Learning

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Introduction
What is this case study about?

A case study of an interdisciplinary program

Embedded library service recognized as a core element of the program

Experiential learning becoming a focus of teaching

Increasing involvement of university-industry partnership creating more opportunities for library services
Library service model*

*YS Song, 2009. Marketing library services: a case study at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. IFLA Publication.

**How does the university library become a proactive partner?**

- **Proactive providers**
  - Library is a collaborator
  - Library participates in parts of the program
  - Library helps design curriculum and training
  - Library’s contribution may be recognized

- **Proactive partners**
  - Library is one of the project owners
  - Library participates in the full project cycle
  - Library helps design curriculum and training
  - Library’s contribution is visibly recognized

- **Reactive providers**
  - Library is a resource center
  - Library’s role is limited
  - Library has very limited resources

- **Reactive partners**
  - Library is a resource center
  - Library’s role is limited but expandable
  - Library is seen as important but its resources are limited
Section 1
Campus Strategic Plans & Experiential Learning

University of Illinois
Strategic Plans 2018-2023
UIUC Campus Strategic Plans

What will shape the future of the university?

- Scholarship, Discovery & Innovation
- Transformative Learning Experiences
- Societal Impact
- Resources & Strategic Investment

“Digital transformation” will be the theme for higher education

UIUC seeks to align its resources to meet the challenges of digital transformation via University-Industry Partnership

Goal 2 (“Transformative Learning Experience”) calls for proactive and innovative teaching methods to educate students with real-world opportunities both nationally and internationally
Goal 2: Transformative learning experience

2.A. Develop a campus-wide initiative in undergraduate and graduate student success that integrates classroom experiences, academic support, academic advising and mentoring, and co-curricular student services and experiences

2.B. Provide new educational pathways and enhance current programs to increase flexibility and to foster education across disciplines

2.C. Encourage every undergraduate student to complete one or more integrative learning experiences, such as capstone courses, internships, research, and study abroad
Experiential Learning
“Learn by doing” – a new paradigm

99% Of students feel better prepared to solve complex problems
95% Of students have a better story to tell recruiters
98% Of students improved their presentation delivery skills
97% Of students are able to work more effectively in a team

Corporations and non-profit organizations provide projects
Students from diverse fields apply and join teams
Teams work on projects for one semester
Teams deliver results
Experiential Learning

What are the benefits for students and partners?

- Solutions to complex problems via BIG’s expertise and access to experts on campus
- Acquisitions of students’ talents and innovative approaches
- Creative recommendations from students with the latest knowledge
- Create solutions to complex business and technology problems as a team
- Apply the latest knowledge to the real-world situations
- Develop teamwork and leadership skills
- Experience problem-solving skills using consulting methods
Experiential Learning

What programs are available on campus?

• School of Information Sciences
• College of Business
• College of Law
• School of Engineering
• School of Social Work
• Office of Undergraduate Programs
• College of Agriculture, Consumer, and Environmental Studies
• College of Liberal Arts
• ... and more

More academic programs are providing experiential learning opportunities to strengthen their curriculum and enhance students’ career prospect.
Section 2: Case Study
Business Intelligence Group (BIG)

(An experiential learning program at UIUC)
Business Intelligence Group (BIG)
An experiential learning program at the School of Information Sciences

BIG’s clients include multinational corporations, non-profit organizations, and technology start-ups.

Student consultants at BIG acquire and practice problem-solving skills critical to the success of today’s organizations.

- BIG is an experiential learning program where both undergraduate and graduate students work on real-world projects
- BIG students are strongly favored by corporate recruiters upon their graduation
- BIG is currently managed by the School of Information Sciences
Objectives
What does BIG seek to accomplish?

1. Develop a platform for project-based and experiential learning

2. Help students solve real-world problems and gain professional growth

3. Help clients receive high-quality advisory services with actual and practical impact
Project Areas
What projects does BIG work on?

- Business and technology research
- Data analytics
- Knowledge management
- Start-up advisory
- Data curation and management
- Information security
- Information security
Sample Projects

Impact of blockchain technology on the agribusiness and food supply chain.

Building a business model and assessing market opportunities for a mobile healthcare device.

Identifying talent gaps for data scientists

Assessing global market opportunities for a smart energy company.

Creating a knowledge management roadmap for an international university consortium

Proposing ideas for data-based marketing for a university alumni association
Project Timeline

What is the typical project process?

Q: How would the University Library be involved in this process as a proactive partner?
Section 3
The University Library at the Core of BIG’s Experiential Learning
New opportunity for the University Library

What role does the Library play?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional model*</th>
<th>BIG Model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Proactive/Reactive provider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Invited or requested to provide instruction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ad-hoc basis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lectures, office hours, workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Proactive partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Founding member of the program</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participates in all phases:</td>
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<td>• Student selection</td>
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<td>• Client selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Co-writer of funding proposals</td>
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</tbody>
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Program Design

How does the librarian work with BIG?

**Training**

Students participate in a total of 16 hours of training and practice sessions. Trainings are planned and coordinated by librarians.

**Planning**

BIG leaders sign project contracts with organizations.

**Engagement**

Throughout the project, the librarian works with each team to ensure high quality research outcome.

**Recruitment**

BIG leaders interview and select students to join BIG based on the requirements of the clients.

3 BIG leaders = faculty + librarian + senior student member
The Librarian’s Role

What does the librarian do at each stage?

The librarians maintains high visibility throughout the project engagement:

- Teams continue to the next stage after the librarian’s approval (coaching)
- The final reports are submitted after the librarian’s approval (quality control)

Planning
- Ensures that the library has sufficient resources
- Prepares research guides and strategies for projects

Recruitment
- Participates in selection process
- Assesses students’ research skills
- Provides recommendations

Training
- Plans research workshops and lectures
- *Fundamentals of research*
- *Advanced techniques in research*

Engagement
- Ensures the sufficiency and adequacy of teams’ research
- Ensures high quality of research results
- Ensures proper use of research materials
A Closer Look at the Engagement Stage

How does the librarian play a key role?

- Each team is assigned to a client
- The team works with the client team to establish the project scope
- The librarian advises the team with research strategies in developing business proposals and industry assessment

- The team conducts brainstorming and issue identification sessions
- Research becomes critical in establishing the team’s direction
- The librarian works with each team to recommend appropriate research methods in identifying key issues and trends critical to understanding the client’s problems.

- The team conducts both primary and secondary research
- The librarian ensures that each team uses an exhaustive list of resources available to them
- The librarian helps develop questionnaires and interview questions based on results from secondary research

- The team develops a “deliverable” with their findings and recommendations
- The librarian creates a checklist to ensure quality: accuracy of data, citations, grammar, proper use of resources, etc.
- The librarian acts as a “quality assurance” specialist

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Main Implications

What does this new program suggest?

1. Become a co-owner of the program

2. Make visible contribution in every stage of the program

3. Be flexible to go beyond traditional librarianship
Become a co-owner of the program

Main implication #1

- Actively seek out opportunities to create and collaborate with various offices, departments, and faculty on campus.
- Do not be content to be a one-time guest speaker. The librarian must be visible throughout the project.
- Owners must take responsibilities – librarians must take part in ensuring the quality of the program.
Make visible contribution in every stage

*Main implication #2*

- All teams move to the next stage with the librarian’s approval
- The librarian examines the evidence of thorough research at each stage
- Students experience how careful research improves the quality of their work
Be flexible – go beyond traditional librarianship

Main implication #3

- **Do not wait for students to come to the library only when needed.** The librarian must regularize and require meetings with the teams. Students must feel that their work quality is better after each meeting.

- **Show expertise beyond librarianship.** Continuous learning and current awareness are essential (e.g. project management, marketing research, technology and business trends, etc.)

- **Define a clear value proposition at each stage.** How can the library help in securing project? What training sessions can the library provide? How can the library improve the quality of research process? How can the library help students write their final reports?

The value of the library’s contribution must be “irreplaceable” and “mission-critical.”
Future plans

- 2-3 more US and international universities seeking to join this program
- More start-up companies proposing to work with BIG
- International companies and government agencies seeking partnership
- More librarians in various subject knowledge in need
Thanks!