

Library Committee Report on Improving Resources for Henderson Library

This document reports on the Faculty Senate Library Committee's response to the Faculty Senate motion to increase support for the Henderson Library collections and resources. The report proceeds by providing background on the Faculty Senate Library Committee's study of the problem, analysis of data gathered, and recommendations to address this issue. As an addendum, this report includes a statement of support from the student representative from the Graduate Student Organization.

Background

On March 26, 2008, the Georgia Southern University Faculty Senate passed the following motion:

In support of Henderson Library's librarians and staff, and in the interest of Georgia Southern University's commitment to excellence in instruction for its undergraduate and graduate students, and in support of faculty research and the University's Doctoral Research University designation, the Faculty Senate requests a joint study by the President's Cabinet, the Strategic Planning Council, and the Faculty Senate Library Committee to provide a comprehensive plan to increase Georgia Southern University's fiscal expenditures in Henderson Library's collections and resources.

To ensure a better informed discussion of possible future library funding, President Bruce Grube asked Provost Linda Bleicken to coordinate an examination of the library's funding within the bigger picture of the University's total budget. Dr. Bleicken asked the Library Committee to serve as the information-gathering body since the committee consists of faculty representatives from all colleges, as well as from the Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Organization.

The committee met three times during Fall Semester 2008, with Dr. Bleicken attending two of the meetings. The committee learned that well over 90% of Henderson Library's budget comes from state funding. There are also some dollars from the interest on University Foundation accounts built with private contributions intended to support library purchases, and from patron payments for lost materials.

To compare Henderson Library funding with funding levels of similar institutions, the Library Committee selected a set of 17 benchmark institutions that met the following criteria:

1. They are public universities.
2. Their enrollments are within +/- 5% of Georgia Southern's enrollment.
3. Their Carnegie Classification in FY 2006 was either Master's I or Doctoral/Research-Intensive.

Fiscal year 2006 data were the latest to be collected and published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In addition to examining the data from NCES, the Library Committee also asked Dean of the Library Bede Mitchell to contact the library directors at the benchmark institutions to ask the following questions:

- What is the percentage of your institution's overall budget that is allocated to the library?
- Does your library receive funds from sources other than state allocations? If yes, please indicate the nature of each source and what percentage of the library's annual expenditures comes from each source, but only if the source exceeds 2% of your overall budget.

[Table 1](#) contains the selected data available from NCES for Georgia Southern University's Henderson Library and for the 17 benchmark libraries. [Table 2](#) contains information from the seven responses received to Dean Mitchell's inquiry, along with Georgia Southern's comparative data. For further context, [Tables 3](#) and [4](#) provide similar data as found in Table 1, but for selected University System of Georgia institutions and for the universities on Georgia Southern's official list of comparators.

Library Committee members noted the following as the most salient information yielded from the benchmark comparisons:

- Henderson Library is substantially below both the mean and median figures for Total Library Expenditures Per Person Enrolled, and for Total Staff Per 1,000 Enrolled (Table 1).
- However, as a percentage of overall institutional budget, Georgia Southern spends more on its library than all but one of the seven responding institutions (Table 2).
- Much of Henderson Library's funding shortfall is therefore due to Georgia Southern itself being less well funded overall than the benchmark institutions.

Of the aspirational and peer institutions responding to Dean Mitchell's request for information, Georgia Southern (17,752) ranks fairly high in terms of the percentage (4.3%) of the institution's overall budget allocated to the library, with \$225.17 "Total Library Expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)". However, there are some interesting discrepancies between the percentage of funding and the actual expenditures. For example, although James Madison University's library (16,737) receives only 2.0% of the institution's overall budget, that still enables JMU to spend \$327.57 per person enrolled (FTE), which means that Georgia Southern does not receive equivalent overall funding. The same was true for Appalachian State's (14, 276) library, which is provided with 3.0% from the institution's overall budget, but spends \$462.27 on "Total Library Expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)".

Further analysis of this data considered Georgia Southern University's recent reclassification as a Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities I. Data were analyzed on four criteria: Total Staff per 1,000 (FTE), Total library expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE), Expenditures: Books, Serial Back Files, Other Materials, and Expenditures: Electronic Serials.

Relation to In-State Institutions

Three in-state Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities I institutions were used for comparison: Kennesaw State University, University of West Georgia and Valdosta State University. Table 5 denotes Georgia Southern University's in-state rankings.

Table 5. Georgia Southern University Rankings on Library Comparison Criteria

Total Staff per 1,000 (FTE)	Total library expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)	Expenditures: Books, Serial Back Files, Other Materials	Expenditures: Electronic Serials
3 rd	3 rd	2 nd	2 nd

These rankings do not show the large disparities between the four institutions, though. Table 6 is a comparison of how Georgia Southern University data differs from those ranked highest and lowest in a particular comparison classification.

Table 6. Differences between Georgia Southern University and higher and lowest ranked institutions by Comparison Category

Library Comparison Criteria	Georgia Southern University	Highest Ranked Institution	Lowest Ranked Institution
Total Staff per 1,000 (FTE)	4.05 (3 rd)	6.83	3.84
Total library expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)	\$225.17 (3 rd)	\$368.65	\$220.45
Expenditures: Books, Serial Back Files, Other Materials	\$318,806 (2 nd)	\$575,000	\$189,528
Expenditures: Electronic Serials	\$258,122 (2 nd)	\$375,000	\$153,294

Table 7 notes how Georgia Southern data compare to the three major Carnegie research institutions in Georgia (Georgia Institute of Technology – Main Campus, Georgia State, and University of Georgia). Data for the three major Georgia Carnegie research institutions are presented using a mean.

Table 7. Georgia Southern University Expenditures versus Georgia Carnegie Research Institutions

Library Comparison Criteria	Georgia Southern University	Georgia Research Universities (Mean)
Total Staff per 1,000 (FTE)	4.05	7.17
Total library expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)	\$225.17	\$578.58
Expenditures: Books, Serial Back Files, Other Materials	\$318,806	\$1,548,071
Expenditures: Electronic Serials	\$258,122	\$3,507,478

Overall, Georgia Southern University does not rank last in any category analyzed nor lead in any category analyzed either in relation to in-state Carnegie peers. Georgia Southern University data do show a pattern of lower allocations than those of in-state Carnegie peer institutions and significantly lower allocations than in-state Carnegie research institutions. No direct relationships were found between school FTE 12 month enrollments and expenditures. No institution was consistently first or last in all categories.

Relation to Out-of-State Peer Institutions

Georgia Southern University's newly recommended peer and inspirational institution list (see Table 4) consists of institutions classified as Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities I (N=4) and Doctoral/Research Universities – Intensive (N=6). Data are presented using these classifications. Table 8 is a ranking of Georgia Southern Expenditures to peer out-of-state Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities I. Table 9 is a comparison of how Georgia Southern University data differ from those ranked highest and lowest in a particular expenditure classification based on Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities I classification.

Table 8. Georgia Southern University Rankings on Library Comparison Criteria (Peer Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities I)

Total Staff per 1,000 (FTE)	Total library expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)	Expenditures: Books, Serial Back Files, Other Materials	Expenditures: Electronic Serials
5 th	5 th	4 th	5 th

Table 9. Differences between Georgia Southern University and higher and lowest ranked institutions by Comparison Category (Peer Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities I)

Library Comparison Criteria	Georgia Southern University	Highest Ranked Institution	Lowest Ranked Institution
Total Staff per 1,000 (FTE)	4.05 (5 th)	7.14	4.93
Total library expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)	\$225.17 (5 th)	\$462.27	\$327.57
Expenditures: Books, Serial Back Files, Other Materials	\$318,806 (5 th)	\$952,986	\$286,885
Expenditures: Electronic Serials	\$258,122 (5 th)	\$1,282,637	\$478,713

Table 10 is a ranking of Georgia Southern Expenditures to peer out-of-state Doctoral/Research Universities – Intensive classifications. Table 11 is a comparison of how Georgia Southern University data differ from those ranked highest and lowest in a particular expenditure classification based on Carnegie Doctoral/Research Universities – Intensive classification.

Table 10. Georgia Southern University Rankings on Library Comparison Criteria (Peer Doctoral/Research Universities – Intensive)

Total Staff per 1,000 (FTE)	Total library expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)	Expenditures: Books, Serial Back Files, Other Materials	Expenditures: Electronic Serials
7 th	7 th	7 th	6 th (one institution did not report this category)

Table 11. Differences between Georgia Southern University and higher and lowest ranked institutions by Comparison Category (Peer Doctoral/Research Universities – Intensive)

Library Comparison Criteria	Georgia Southern University	Highest Ranked Institution	Lowest Ranked Institution
Total Staff per 1,000 (FTE)	4.05 (7 th)	9.25	4.45
Total library expenditures Per Person Enrolled (FTE)	\$225.17 (7 th)	\$583.25	\$356.37
Expenditures: Books, Serial Back Files, Other Materials	\$318,806 (7 th)	\$1,555,296	\$548,600
Expenditures: Electronic Serials	\$258,122 (6 th)	\$1,491.166	\$567,403

Overall, Georgia Southern University is at or near the bottom of library allocations when compared to our out-of-state peer and inspirational institution list. No direct relationships were found between school FTE 12 month enrollments and expenditures.

Georgia Southern University must compete at the level of other peer institutions. On-campus library resources are a major reason some students will choose to attend an on-campus graduate program. Undergraduates need access to on-campus and on-line resources that will allow them to synthesize and elaborate on the trends and issues in their chosen disciplines. Library resources both on-line and on-campus are a reason 'recruited' faculty will accept faculty positions here given our teacher-scholar research agenda. Faculty members must have access to current materials to conduct quality research.

Direction for Report

With the preceding analysis of the data in mind, the committee decided to consider avenues for increasing funding for Henderson Library resources:

- Tuition from online courses;
- The Student Technology Fee;
- Private Fund-Raising.

Tuition from Online Courses

Based upon analysis by library faculty on the Online Tuition Revenue Task Force, we know a significant portion of the Library's expenses are used to support distance education. In 2008 we borrowed 1161 returnables (books, microfilm, videos) and received 2876 articles for a total of 4037 filled requests from other libraries' collections. We spent a total of \$5,418.00 in borrowing fees to obtain these items – coming to a low cost of \$1.35 average per item we obtained. This is because we belong to 5 consortial lending groups – we agree to lend to each other at no charge. 91.2% of our filled requests were obtained free of charge from other libraries. When we do have to pay, the borrowing fees are usually between \$10 and \$20 but some libraries charge more. Copyright fees are also another concern that can cost the library as much as \$600 per year, a cost that will only increase as graduate programs grow.

Postage is a high cost for ILL. 564 of the 4037 ILL loans or photocopies were for Distance Learners. We also supplied them with 283 items from our own collection. We mail all returnables to Distance Learners' homes and supply them with a postage-paid return label. And, we are paying the postage to return borrowed items to owning libraries and lend the libraries our returnables. As of July 2007, we no longer spend postage on any photocopies for our patrons or other libraries – all are scanned and delivered electronically.

The other major cost for ILL is salaries and wages. Students work a total of 60-70 hours a week in the ILL office. Staff spend 70 hours a week on ILL work and librarian spends 30 hours a week.

Of course, ILL and Document Delivery expenses are in addition to the subscription costs paid by the Library, many of which are license costs based upon enrollment FTE and which rise significantly each year due to an average of 8% annual inflation. These costs are also driven upward by annual enrollment increases, which include distance learners. Overall, these costs increase up to 10-12% annually. Hence the upcoming review of all subscriptions for journals, databases, etc., responds not only to the current budget crisis, but also to the years of flat-level budgeting for Henderson Library in the face of inflation, combined with this year's anticipated significant reduction in year-end funds.

A recent study correlates library funding with return on investment (ROI). The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign realizes a \$4.38 ROI for each dollar of library funding; this figure is based solely upon "grant income secured by faculty using library resources," but "does not include the value of library resources to faculty in teaching classes or in conducting their research." (http://liber.library.uu.nl/publish/issues/2008-3_4/?000269).

There have been a few informal surveys about this topic lately on library discussion lists. Dr. Farzaneh Razzaghi, Library Director of The University of Texas-Pan American, shared that they have a \$2.50 per credit hour library technology fee from the total university enrollment, which comes to about \$1 million a year for the library. All of the library's hardware, free printing for students, and electronic databases are supplied out of this fee. Such a formula could be adapted for Georgia Southern, while factoring in the percentage of credit hours in our distance graduate programs. For fiscal year 2008, for example, all Georgia Southern students generated 471,416 credit hours. If each student were charged \$2.50 per credit hour to support the library, the resulting revenue would be \$1,178,540.

Our rising graduate enrollment is resulting in a growing level of research being supported by Henderson Library in our subscription and purchase expenditures. Meanwhile, the percentage of these students who are distance learners significantly affects our level of expenditures for interlibrary loan and document delivery, as well as our rising costs for licensing online resources based upon our rising enrollment. A library resource fee could also be charged especially to this group of students.

The Student Technology Fee

We should take a comprehensive look at our institution's instructional delivery methods. We posit that the library's online subscriptions, access to hardware and software, and the mitigation of rising textbook costs are interrelated.

Databases have been curtailed by the lack of additional budget resources and/or increasing subscription costs for the services. As noted in other proposals (e.g. the Online tuition revenue task force), these subscription costs have both fixed and variable components that have caused annual increases to average between 10-12%. As a result, the library has been forced over the years to cancel an ever-expanding number of journal subscriptions, book purchases, and online data resources.

At the same time, Georgia Southern instituted a student technology fee, currently \$75 a semester. As noted in the guidelines:

Technology fee revenues should be used primarily for the direct benefit of students to assist them in meeting the educational objectives of their academic programs. Access is important: access to productivity tools, discipline specific software packages, computers and printers, internal and extra databases, introductory and advance training, and access to networks.”

This problem can be tied to the rising price of textbooks. The solution to both could lie in requiring students to assume responsibility for their own laptops, rather than being so dependent on the University for computer labs. Textbook prices have also risen sharply enough to prompt the chancellor in 2004 to commission a taskforce “to identify and describe the root causes of textbook price escalation.” At the time, it was noted that textbook costs had risen to 20% of the cost of college attendance. Using the Georgia Southern bookstore’s website, a student taking four junior core courses in business, for example, would need \$690 for new books and \$517 for used books. Tuition and fees for an in-state continuing student are \$2115. So buying new books represents an additional cost of 32% relative to tuition and fees for a typical student.

For fiscal year 2009, the Student Technology Fee Committee provided \$267,000 to the library. Of that amount, \$243,000 went to hardware (new computers and printing supplies) and student assistantships. For the spring semester 2007, approximately \$1,220,000 was awarded by the committee to the entire university. About \$1,000,000 of that went to hardware (new computers) and smart classrooms. The evidence suggests that the technology fee has historically been used for hardware upgrades.

The library, on the other hand, has seen an increasing component of its expenses going to online subscription and distance learning costs. These costs can be categorized as information costs. Our question is, at what point do we migrate from an emphasis on covering hardware costs (generally decreasing with technological innovation) to an emphasis on covering information costs (increasing with technological innovation)? As our information portal, the library has been asked to carry an ever-increasing share of the latter with no

corresponding increase in resources. Hence, what we are seeing is a never-ending cycle of reductions in subscriptions to journals and online databases.

Since any shift in emphasis might be deemed as adding an additional cost to students in the form of a "library technology fee," we offer the following thoughts.

This spring 2009 semester, a student had the option to buy a new textbook for Corporate Finance at a cost of \$143, a used textbook for \$107, or a customized ebook providing only those chapters requested by the specific instructor for \$25. At the same time a functional laptop with Wifi connectivity costs about \$700. If instructors would use more ebooks, students would currently save approximately \$300-\$400 per semester in textbook costs, which would pay for the cost of a laptop in one year. The availability of laptops would reduce the number of computers needed in the labs and hence the use of technology fees on hardware updates.

Investigating Private Funding

One of the issues the Library Committee has discussed to partially remedy the current budget shortage is to increase efforts for private fund raising. Many fund-raising programs in libraries begin with the development of a support group, usually a Friends of the Library group, which is already in place at Georgia Southern. In academia, it is also common to run a yearly fund drives. These techniques are essential for raising the visibility of the library within and around the campus community, and for conveying the message to the academic administration that it is indeed possible to raise money for library needs. Once a library has developed a group of supporters, the next step is to ensure that a core subset of this group remains loyal through consistent annual donations and begins to give at levels considerably higher than the minimum "dues." With this group of people, the goal is to develop in them a feeling of personal commitment to the library and to encourage them to begin to consider gifts of a larger size. In some cases, it may be fitting to assign plaques that are permanently placed in the library to give testimony to loyal supporters in a highly visible public place. To make a significant difference in the development of external resources, however, the library must be a full participant in the major gift programs of the institution together with the schools of the university, athletics, and financial aid.

Another fund raising venue that the committee be investigated is the potential of internet fund raising or cybergift giving. While the library currently gives some information on the website regarding donations, it may be a more proactive approach to introduce a "Donate Now" button on the library's home page. As one of the core facilities of the university, the library needs to consider new methods that will build upon the collections available, particularly in a time when our graduate student population is growing.

General Conclusions

These data represent several trends:

- Georgia Southern University library allocations when compared to in-state peers are lower than most institutions but not significantly lower in all categories.
- Georgia Southern University library allocations when compared to out-of-state peers are at or near the bottom of library expenditures for all categories.
- Institution type (Research Institution versus Masters Colleges and Universities I) does not always mean more expenditures per category.
- Data do not denote whether or not any peer institution had major graduate programs in law, medicine, etc. This type of information can clearly impact allocations. However, even with this knowledge, Georgia Southern University allocations are still very low when compared to institutions without such programs.
- Georgia Southern University dollars spent per person (FTE) are very low when compared to all institutions. This finding leads directly to funding issues in other comparison categories.

Recommendations

- Georgia Southern should consider directing to the Library budget dollars from a per-credit-hour charge for online classes.
- Georgia Southern should explore alternatives to current technology strategies. For example, should so much of the student technology fee continue to fund desktop computers? Freeing up some of the technology fee from continually updating hardware would enable the University to redirect funds to databases and other electronic library resources.
- Henderson Library should be a higher priority in Georgia Southern University fundraising, especially online since the library receives so much traffic.
- Every year the library committee shall conduct a library comparison of comparable in-state and out-of-state peer institutions to assess the distribution of library funds and report the results to the faculty senate, noting how Georgia Southern University is addressing these expenditure gaps.

Addendum: Graduate Students' Perspective on Budget Cuts involving University Libraries

As the graduate student representative on the Georgia Southern University Library Committee, it is my duty to inform the members of the committee how the proposed budget cuts will affect the graduate students. After consulting with members of my own program, department, college, and the members of the Graduate Student Organization (GSO), there is overwhelming concern over cutting library services and resources.

Georgia Southern University touts itself as a Carnegie Doctoral Research Institution, a distinction that is attractive to students as they chose to pursue graduate studies. As graduate students, many of us take part in research, both personal and in conjunction with faculty, that requires us to utilize the library extensively. Any budget cuts will most likely affect our ability to perform our research in a timely and systematic way. For example, the proposed cut to GIL express was greatly troubling to students as this took away the timely service of textbook and other reference materials from within University System of Georgia (USG) institutions. This program allows for students to get the necessary materials in an efficient way, adding stability to all schools in the USG as it allows for collaboration and support across the system. Cancelling this program greatly disturbs the timely completion of projects and puts our students at the mercy of inter-library loan, which takes much longer.

Other cuts involve cancelling journal subscriptions. How will these journals be selected? As students, we are aware of the rising subscription costs, but many programs are without journal subscriptions already, and further cuts will limit our resources tremendously. Today's library is becoming virtual and electronic rather than brick and mortar as in the past. Our leaders need to realize this and invest in the necessary journals for our programs. We all appreciate our newly renovated and expanded library, but so many resources are online, and funding cannot ignore that fact. In moving forward, our leadership must account for the library of the future so as to prepare the university for growth and stability.

According to the strategic plan of Georgia Southern University, the university wants to increase its graduate student population to a certain percent of the undergraduate population (Currently we are at 12%). Increasing the number of students while decreasing the funding for a fully functional library is a problem as the demand for materials, resources, and staff members will increase. Ignoring this demand for resources will result in a graduate experience that is sub-par for any university, let alone a Carnegie Doctoral Research university.

The graduate students strongly oppose cutting the library's budget because the quality of our education will decrease. It is important to equip students to succeed, and by taking away funding and our chances to produce sound research, Georgia Southern Students will be at a disadvantage. The graduate students strongly encourage the USG to cut funds from other projects because without a functional library, our students cannot achieve their true potential.

-- Stephen Gonzalez, Graduate Student Representative to the Faculty Senate Library Committee

