

UP DILIMAN LIBRARIES IN TRANSFORMATION

A Vision Paper for the University Library Diliman

By


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VISION

To be recognized as the premier academic and research libraries in Asia with nurturing and inclusive social learning spaces for collaboration, innovation, and re-creation.

MISSION

To provide the UP community and various publics with the best library resources and services for learning, instruction, research, extension and public service.

This paper will reflect primarily on the transformations that are happening in UP Diliman (UPD) Libraries and will describe my vision of what UPD Libraries may become, achieve, and offer in the next couple of years.

These transformations shall be in terms of the following:

- Physical Transformation
- Transformation in Library Services and Programs
- Transformed Library Personnel

Most of these initiatives and activities to transform the libraries of UP Diliman have already been started and these I intend to continue in the next three (3) years to fully realize the stated vision and mission.

Physical Transformation

Social Learning Spaces

Traditional libraries had books at its center while a transformed library is centered around the user experience. The transformation in the physical space in the library is not just an architectural restatement but a reconceptualization of the library as physical space to reflect new functions and uses.

Libraries in UP Diliman must have flexible space designs to allow for changing uses. Social learning spaces, such as information commons, discussion rooms, meeting rooms, and makerspaces are collaborative and creative spaces designed to stimulate the imagination of students, faculty, and other library users.

In 2014-2015, the University Library Diliman, in cooperation with the Office of the Campus Architect (OCA), developed the proposal for the renovation and refurbishing of the Main Library (Gonzalez Hall) to modernize its facilities, equipment, and services. In 2015, the project was given a total of P205 million initial funding, P100 million from the UP System and P105 million from UP Diliman's Undergraduate Tuition Fee Increment (UGTFI).

In 2016, a strategic facility planning workshop was conducted by the University Library administration, with key people from the OCA, to plan for the change of the service model from traditional to the "Learning Commons" concept. To adapt to the changing learning styles of 21st Century learner, the Learning Commons brings out the classroom and laboratory outside their confines and provides collaborative learning spaces for the school community.

While this strategic facility plan was developed specifically for the Main Library, the concept of the Learning Commons may be applied in all other libraries in Diliman.

However, the result of the structural assessment conducted in 2016 on the Gonzalez Hall building suggests that a structural retrofitting is necessary to be able to implement the proposed Learning Commons. This could cause delay in the project implementation.

Currently, the structural retrofitting design is being prepared by the OCA and we are hoping that the actual retrofitting will commence before the end of the current year or early next year.

Meanwhile, the Library Spaces Committee, which I currently Chair, has already identified the specific functional requirements and the corresponding technological, personnel, and other facility requirements for the Learning Commons. We hope to see the transformation of physical spaces in the UP Diliman libraries happen in the next 2 to 3 years.

Main Library Plaza

The Land Use Plan of the UP Diliman designates the Main Library as part of the campus core and, more specifically, as a historical and tourism district. It was the first building to be constructed when the university transferred from Manila to Diliman. Its construction started in 1949 and was completed in 1951.

The street fronting the Main Library (Apacible St.) is currently closed to vehicular traffic and is only used by pedestrians crossing from Roxas Ave. to Osmeña Ave. and vice versa. A portion of the said street is slowly giving way to land subsidence. Efforts have been made to revise the vicinity, mainly by laying down layers of asphalt.

The only existing furniture in the area are a few benches. These are seldom used due to their location. There are also some lamp posts situated in the area that do not give ample lighting at night.

Redevelopment of the area will aid in avoiding further deterioration. This would also permit users to maximize the open space fronting the Main Library. Converting the space to a plaza and widening of the street will also allow various activities, such as, performances, exhibits, gatherings, and even commencement exercises to be accommodated.

Current funding for this project, amounting to approximately P37.2 million, has been approved by the UP System. The bidding for the design and build of the proposed Main Library Plaza and miscellaneous works was just recently conducted. We therefore hope to see another popular landmark in the campus by next year (2018).

Offsite Storage Facility

Storage space is a perennial problem at the Main Library as well as in the other College and Unit Libraries in Diliman. While we have started implementing the "e-first policy" on acquisitions, most of the published Filipiniana materials are still not available in digital format. Moreover, archival records from the university deposited at the University Archives are usually in print. Thus, these materials will continue to increase and occupy more space as we continue to acquire various printed resources in the University Library.

While we have planned to reconfigure the spaces to maximize the storage, there is a limitation in terms of the load capacity of the Main Library building. Thus, it is not recommended to add more weight especially in the upper floors of the Main Library building. This brings us to the idea of an alternative storage space which should be located in another building (offsite). This offsite storage facility should house the archival records of the university as well as the preservation copies (duplicates) of Filipiniana books in the Main Library. Consequently, this should serve as back-up of important collections in the Main Library. At the same time, digital materials being preserved in the Main Library Data Center can be mirrored and stored in this offsite facility. This facility should provide additional security to our valuable collection and may serve as recovery site in case of data loss due to

fire, flood, or other natural disasters. I hope this will be built soon to ensure protection of our valuable library resources.

Finally, we should also explore cloud storage for back-up of our important digital collections. Cloud storage facilities provide a more stable platform with minimum downtime and less maintenance costs. Given its benefits, it may offer lower total cost of ownership. I certainly hope that we will be able to implement this cloud-based storage to ensure protection of important resources in our libraries.

Transformation in Library Services and Programs

With new learning spaces and facilities, better infrastructure and modern information and communication technologies are needed to be able to provide more efficient services to library users.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Technology

In the last two (2) years, we have pilot-tested the implementation of the RFID technologies in the Main Library. This technology will provide the following core benefits to the UPD Libraries: secure the collection; facilitate circulation transactions, including self-service operations; and speed-up inventory of items, including location of missing items. With the existing installation at the CSSP Library and Filipiniana Books Sections, and on-going implementation at the UP School of Library and Information Studies (UP SLIS) and UP Extension Program in Pampanga (UPEPP) Libraries, we are confident that this technology will allow the UPD Libraries to provide more efficient services and at the same time ease the work of the library staff.

I intend to continue the implementation of RFID in UP Diliman libraries and would be introducing more applications, such as, barrier gates and book drops, in the next three (3) years given the opportunity.

Recently, we have completed the bidding of five (5) sets of RFID devices for five (5) college libraries in Diliman. More libraries are expected to implement the technology following this successful bidding.

Contactless Smart Card Technology

In addition, I have also proposed for the upgrade of the UP Identification (ID) Card to contactless smart card technology. This project is in coordination with the Office of the University Registrar. With smart cards, the UP ID will have improved security and the convenience of being able to use a single card for multiple transactions. Some possible applications of the smart card in the university include, but not limited to, facility access, cashless payments, parking and transportations, protecting valuable assets, and time and attendance monitoring.

In the UP Libraries, the smart card can be used in conjunction with the RFID technologies mentioned above. Specifically, smart card technology can be utilized in the following library services/operations: self-service stations (check-out); circulation services (staff-assisted); electronic turnstile or barrier gates to control access to reading areas or entrance to libraries or buildings; security access control for other library spaces (discussion rooms, meeting rooms, multimedia rooms, computer laboratories, etc.); and self-service printing or photocopying.

Target full implementation of this new UP ID Card is on the 2nd Semester AY 2017-2018 though the Chancellor has approved my request to pilot test this in Diliman this 1st Semester AY 2017-2018 for new students and new faculty/employees. If successful, I hope to implement this in the entire UP System in 2018.

Enhanced Information Systems

At the moment, the new integrated library system (iLib 2.0) is still under development. This is in coordination with the UP Information Technology Development Center (UP ITDC). The new system is designed to be centralized to serve as a union database for all library holdings of the different libraries in the entire UP System. Some new features that we can expect from this new platform include: integration with SAIS and HRIS of eUP (now UP Information System); integration with RFID technologies; and use of mobile applications for Android and iOS. Pilot implementation is scheduled this 1st Semester AY 2017-2018.

Meanwhile, in May 2017, we have launched our institutional repository called Digital Archives @ UP Diliman. Other than being the official repository of university records, personal papers, UP publications, and presidential papers, this platform was custom-developed to accept online submission of electronic theses and dissertations from graduates of the university. This is in accordance with the memo on revised policy on public access to theses and dissertations issued by President Pascual in 2012 (Memo No. PAEP 2012-03) which was further explicated via issuances (Memo Nos. BMP 12-011 and FRN 15-038) from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Research and Development (OVCRD) providing the guidelines for implementation and clarifications on the said policy.

In addition to providing easy access to the archival collections of the university, this platform will also offer to preserve all digital collections uploaded in its database.

Currently, the platform may be accessed thru the URL <https://digitalarchives.upd.edu.ph> and we intend to continue its development and enhance its interfaces and functions to be able to serve its intended purpose. Marketing of the platform to maximize its use will be one of our next activities.

Content Enhancement

The University is spending millions on online databases/electronic journals subscriptions. Access to these online resources are usually limited on an on-campus premise. Some students (especially graduate students), faculty, and researchers in the university may prefer to do research off-campus. Thus, remote access to these online subscriptions must be made available.

Currently, we are implementing an access management system (called EZProxy) to provide remote access to all our subscribed electronic resources. Once available, this should promote and increase the usage of our online subscriptions and eventually encourage the UP constituents to produce more research outputs. Expect this platform to be available very soon.

From the OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogs), libraries have developed the next-generation of search engines called Web scale Discovery Services. These are tools that search seamlessly across a wide range of local and remote content (using just one search interface) and provide relevant ranked results. We have recently subscribed to this service (EBSCO Discovery Service) and we intend to connect more resources to it, including our own local databases, to enhance its search capability and increase its content and usability.

With our Digitization Services Section now equipped with high-end scanners and our staff already trained in digital image processing and digital preservation, we can now expand this service to digitize all our Filipiniana and special collections. Because we have the largest and richest collection of Filipiniana materials, we should continue preserving these resources, including the digitized copies, to ensure that these important resources remain accessible in the future. In addition, because we are the official repository of UP Diliman and UP System records, we should also make sure that we are able to archive these records properly and preserve both the print and the digital versions. This can be done by expanding the digitization services and hiring more personnel to do the digitization and organization of archival documents. A separate project proposal has been prepared and will be submitted to the Chancellor for funding soon.

On the other hand, the Strategic Communication, Research and Marketing Section (StratCom), in coordination with the Information Services and Instruction Section (ISAIS), of the UPD University Library, initiated programs and activities to further promote the University Library's services and resources. The use of social media

(Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) have provided the platforms for these initiatives. In addition, we have utilized digital media in marketing and promoting our products and services using digital signage displays and smart TVs. I intend to explore more of these online platforms, e.g., Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) for library instruction, to provide more efficient information literacy services.

With the UP Diliman libraries transformed, the StratCom should prepare to develop more promotional materials, both in print and digital form, not only to market our information resources and services, but also to encourage library users to explore the new social learning spaces and use the advanced technologies that our transformed libraries will be offering.

With these trends and technologies being implemented, I see the UP Diliman libraries going fully automated in the near future.

Transformed Library Personnel

With modern facilities, equipment, and services in the library, there is also a need to develop the library workforce to provide efficient support services and address the constantly changing needs of the library users.

Gone are the stereotypical librarians of the past, barricaded behind a desk or guarding the silence in a room full of books. Modern librarians, sometimes referred to as information professionals or knowledge workers, are more dynamic and proactive, are able to interact with and assist users in both the physical and virtual environments, are tech-savvy and are continuously learning about new technologies, can work collaboratively with users to solve problems, can assist in the creation of user-created content, can organize and manage various types of information resources (print, analog, or digital), and can take on research- and technology-oriented projects.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

With the UPD Libraries undergoing significant transformations in the next three (3) years, there is a need to upgrade the competencies of library personnel especially in the areas of information technology (e.g., learning management systems, digitization, digital preservation, digital libraries, database management, library services platform), emerging trends in libraries (e.g., makerspaces, big data, internet of things, altmetrics, digital scholarship, connected learning, gamification, and virtual reality and augmented reality), cataloging e-resources with RDA, e-resources management, leadership, and research and publication.

To address the capacity-building requirements of our library personnel, our Staff Training and Development Committee (STDC) recently conducted a training needs assessment to determine the specific aspects of library work the library personnel may need to be trained on and the competencies we need to develop further.

In addition, the Library Personnel Committee (LPC) together with an ad-hoc committee, which I chaired, developed the new selection criteria for Librarians that is intended to encourage librarians to pursue further continuing professional education, such as: pursuing graduate studies; attending and participating in seminars and training programs; presenting papers in conferences; conducting research; engaging in extension work or outreach programs; teaching Library and Information Science courses in the academe; and joining professional organizations as officers.

These are in line with the strict implementation of Republic Act 10912, or the Continuing Professional Development Act of 2016, where all professionals, librarians included, are required to take part in continuing professional development programs. Within the compliance period of three (3) years, and before renewal of professional license issued by the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), librarians are now required to acquire forty-five (45) credit units of continuing professional education (CPE).

All library personnel, including non-librarians, must therefore be given equal opportunities to attend trainings, conferences, seminars, and other CPD programs, not just for the purpose of renewing the professional license,

but more importantly, to keep up with the developments and trends in libraries and librarianship, and address the emerging issues and changing users' needs of the UPD Libraries.

Aside from sending our staff to national and international trainings, conferences, and seminars, we also conduct in-house training-workshops and seminars to help upgrade our staff's competencies and advance their knowledge. We are fortunate to have the expertise to conduct training-workshops and lectures on the different aspects of librarianship and information science. In fact, many of our staff are being tapped by different professional organizations or academic institutions to serve as resource speakers in forums, seminars, conferences, or training programs. We should continue to utilize our own librarians who are experts in the field to develop and train the next-generation of library professionals and leaders in UPD.

Other than trainings and seminars, internship programs provided by academic universities abroad should be pursued by the University Library Diliman to provide our librarians with a good understanding of the management and operation of more advanced foreign academic libraries. Internship programs will certainly enhance the skills of our librarians and provide opportunities for them to learn new technologies and information services which they can cascade to UP Diliman libraries.

In 2016, I was able to send one (1) of our college librarians to Nanyang Technological University Libraries in Singapore to participate in a three-week professional internship program. Other similar programs are also offered in other academic universities abroad, particularly in ASEAN member universities, and must be explored to give opportunities to our librarians to learn from the experiences and best practices of more advanced university libraries.

Librarians as Researchers

Librarians' involvement in research is usually limited to helping researchers efficiently locate and access relevant information resources, but seldom are they the researchers themselves. Currently, very few among the UPD Librarians are submitting research or creative works for paper presentations or publication, or are being invited to present lectures in seminars or conduct training workshops. I believe that librarians can also be good researchers having been exposed to various information resources and being adept with the proper research tools and technologies to use. Thus, we should encourage librarians to engage in research, present their papers in conferences, and eventually publish their work in peer reviewed journals.

Emerging Librarian Positions

With transformed libraries, new librarian positions have also evolved to cater to and support the new areas and emerging trends in libraries and librarianship. Some emerging librarian positions include, but not limited to, Data Science Librarians, Metadata Services Librarians, Digital Curators, Digital Archivists, Electronic Resources Librarians, and User Experience and Emerging Technologies Librarians.

Meanwhile, while it is difficult to create plantilla items for these positions, we can train our existing librarians to acquire and develop these new competencies to prepare them to handle the tasks intended for these emerging librarian positions.

Given the opportunity to continue serving the university as your University Librarian, and with the full support of the UP Diliman and UP System Administration, I am confident that we will be able to realize our vision and mission in the next three (3) years.