1-5-2011

Use of Academic Library Strategic Priorities during Severe Budget Reductions

Anne Marie Casey
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, caseya3@erau.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://commons.erau.edu/hunt-library-staff-works

Part of the Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons, and the Library and Information Science Commons

Scholarly Commons Citation

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Hunt Library at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Staff Works - Hunt Library by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact commons@erau.edu.
Problem Statement

By committing to specific priorities while engaged in planning, an academic library can allocate resources to the areas of greatest importance and set goals that advance that organization in the direction of meeting the highest priorities. During periods of relative stability, priorities can offer a guide to allocating resources. In less favorable periods, such as an economic downturn, they may guide decision-makers through the realization of resources.

Despite the potential benefits of established strategic priorities, no research has examined the subject in regard to academic libraries. This study fills that void by investigating how libraries use strategic priorities at a time of severe economic recession. Do they maintain, abandon, or re-evaluate and adjust priorities and why? Do library managers exhibit leadership or management in their handling of priorities? How do library priorities fit into the institutional context?

A Study of leadership and Management

Anne Marie Casey, Simmons College

Use of Academic Library Strategic Priorities during Severe Budget Reductions

Research Design

- Case Study Method
- Multiple Case Design

Site Selection

- Institutions with Carnegie Classification of Master’s L: Master’s Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
- Large enough to offer multiple degree programs
- Often serve by one main academic library
- Five states with highest unemployment rates in November, 2009
- California
- Michigan
- Nevada
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Search Web sites of 45 institutions for evidence of strategic plans that include priorities
- Discovered five such institutions
- Two had plans that were not current
- Resulted in three institutions in California and Michigan

Procedures

Conducted focus group interviews with:
- Management Team members
- Librarian volunteers
- Staff volunteers
- Document Analysis
- Strategic plans
- Other planning documents
- Minutes of meetings and other internal communication case studies shared

Conducted personal interviews with:
- Library Director
- Chief Academic Officers (CAO)
- Representative of Institutional Planning, if such a department exists

Conducted site visits:
- Fall 2009
- Fall 2010

Conducted site visits:
- Fall 2009
- Fall 2010

Case Study Method

Minutes of meetings and other internal communication case studies shared

Institutional Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment - Fall 2009</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time faculty</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate students</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate students</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Reductions - FY10</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
<td>0 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Reductions</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of libraries</td>
<td>1 central, 1 branch</td>
<td>1 central, 1 branch</td>
<td>1 central, 1 branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director’s supervision</td>
<td>CAO</td>
<td>CAO</td>
<td>CAO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings

- Libraries maintain priorities regardless of external pressures.
- Internal and external communication about the library response to budget reductions is a priority.
- Libraries use strategic priorities to guide decisions related to budget reductions.
- Leadership traits are apparent among the directors and other managers.
- Chief Academic Officers respect directors and include them in decision-making with college deans.

Characteristics of Leadership and Management*

Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish agenda</td>
<td>Create a vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set time limits</td>
<td>Clarify big picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocate resources</td>
<td>Set strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private structure</td>
<td>Communicate goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make job placements</td>
<td>Seek commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish rules and procedures</td>
<td>Build teams and coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop outcomes</td>
<td>Inspire and energize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate creative solutions</td>
<td>Empower subordinates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take corrective actions</td>
<td>Tackle current needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preliminary Conclusions

- Librarians align priorities with those of the institution.
- Chief Academic Officers respect directors and include them in decision-making with college deans.
- Management teams exist at all levels of the organization.
- Leadership traits are apparent among the directors and other managers.
- Librarians use strategic priorities to guide decisions related to budget reductions.
- Internal and external communication about the library response to budget reductions is a priority.
- Libraries maintain priorities regardless of external pressures.
- Goals may change; priorities are constant for the life of a given strategic plan.
- Library personnel at all levels view service as the unspoken priority that underlies all they do.
- Strategic priorities do guide decision-making in response to budget reductions that is considered appropriate and fair by all stakeholders of the library.

Ideas for Further Research

1. Do these libraries maintain priorities because strategic planning is very important to leaders?
2. Should the research be repeated with libraries that do not display current strategic plans?
3. Or the research be repeated with libraries that do not display current strategic plans?
4. Or the research be repeated with libraries that do not display current strategic plans?
5. Or the research be repeated with libraries that do not display current strategic plans?