FIRST DRAFT - FOR DISCUSSION

Creating the Future:

A 2020 Vision and Plan for Library Service

in New York State

Preliminary Recommendations of the New York State Regents Advisory Council on Libraries to the New York State Board of Regents
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Introduction

In April 2010, the New York State Board of Regents challenged the library community to rethink the State’s vast array of library services to ensure that they are aligned with modern efficiencies and expectations and prepared for the future as an essential and vibrant part of the State’s educational infrastructure.

Working through the Regents Advisory Council, library users, trustees, and staff have spoken out with regard to their libraries, offering not only affirmation of the importance of libraries, but also numerous suggestions for progress and models of success.

Purpose

The Board of Regents is responsible for the general supervision of all educational activities within the State of New York. As such, it must also articulate and promote a vision that inspires and promotes excellence in all the educational institutions within its purview. The Board of Regents charters public and association libraries, as well as PreK-12 schools, colleges and universities, and cultural institutions, both public and private, which operate school, academic and special libraries as a critical component of their educational programs and services. The Board of Regents also oversees the New York State Library and the 73 library systems that tie these libraries and other special libraries, located in hospitals, courts, businesses, government agencies, prisons and other public and private organizations, together into a robust statewide network of some 7,000 libraries.

Though the original charge for this effort was for “Vision 2020”, we believe that the future of libraries can be found today, right before us in the remarkable work currently being done by visionary librarians and trustees who understand the needs of their constituents and respond with innovation and service.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this document is to provide the Board of Regents with a clear vision of what excellent libraries should look like and to offer models of success that may be emulated by libraries throughout New York. Specific Regents’ policy suggestions that would move this vision forward are noted where appropriate.
General

Libraries provide the physical and virtual spaces that are an integral part of an overarching system that provides continuous opportunities for learning from birth to senior age. By empowering individuals in an open democracy, they enable and facilitate the creation of wealth through the spread of knowledge and the promotion of innovation. Library “profit” is demonstrated through both the promotion of economic enterprise and the social return on investment. The role of a library, any library, to the individual is a reflection based upon where a person is in his or her life and the challenges faced at that time.

Libraries continue to undergo tremendous changes as they move to virtual services in response to changes in technology and the expectations of their patrons.

One significant change is the increasing convergence among traditionally different types of libraries in the services they offer. Such convergence includes online access to digital resources; the re-tasking of library space; and the need for staff with skills in virtual librarianship, collaborative learning, as well as more customary types of service.

Regardless of the many levels of technological change, libraries remain the embodiment of Americans’ “right to educate themselves”, a critical necessity in a knowledge economy where everyone must relentlessly improve their skills throughout their lifetime. The library is what makes lifelong learning for all citizens both possible and practical, including, and perhaps especially, for those with special challenges such as the disabled, homeless and economically deprived. People unable to respond to new challenges and invest in their own abilities are likely to become an economic liability, unable to participate fully in society.

Libraries continue to represent a community investment in a vision of a better tomorrow through sharing information, knowledge and, hopefully, wisdom. They are the repositories for our communities’, our state’s, and our nation’s memory and offer us an institution that reflects the American Dream of self-help and equity.

Today’s libraries are busier and more vibrant than ever because of, not in spite of, the dramatic impact of digital technology. But even though they have a well established and well respected brand, libraries suffer from outdated public attitudes based on misperceptions of their traditional roles, stereotypes and the constant assault of for-profit media.
**General Recommendations**

To assure that tomorrow’s libraries continue to be a vibrant and vital part of our citizen’s lifelong learning experience all libraries must:

- Collaborate to integrate services and collections of all types of libraries while developing a transparent and seamless world of library services that are ubiquitous and instantaneous yet personalized and flexible, serving all ages and needs.

- Improve the marketing of library services to all clientele and communities by rebranding libraries while addressing the erroneous perceptions about the need for libraries in a digital world. Libraries of all types will need to develop economic justifications for the investments that governments, communities, individuals and philanthropic organizations are asked to make in libraries.

- Develop better tools for advocacy, and identify library champions at all levels of governance: university and school boards, town and city management, State Education Department, Board of Regents, New York State Legislature and Executive branch.

- Recruit technologically savvy staff and train current staff in virtual librarianship while influencing higher education to appropriately educate tomorrow’s service providers.

- Actively address issues concerning the privatization of information and its impact on traditional models of library services such as free access, free lending and the inter-sharing of materials among libraries; advocate for the delivery of open content as embodied in initiatives such as the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities*.

  ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Debelaration_on_Open_Access_to_Knowledge_in_the_Sciences_and_Humanities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Debelaration_on_Open_Access_to_Knowledge_in_the_Sciences_and_Humanities))

- Function at the front lines of e-resources purchasing, licensing, digital rights management, digital curation, resource-sharing, and preservation.

- Create collaborative partnerships with all cultural and educational organizations in the state to offer our citizens the most comprehensive educational opportunities available anywhere in the world.
School Libraries

School libraries are deeply engaged in the implementation of the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards. There is a well documented connection between student achievement and effective school libraries. The role of school librarians is evolving as they teach students information literacy to be savvy consumers, producers and judges of appropriate content in all formats. School librarians are increasingly collaborating with teachers in designing curricula and developing learning experiences that are ideally placed to support differentiated instruction and facilitate special programs for the gifted as well as students with special needs. The school librarian is unique in that he/she addresses the depth and breadth of the entire curriculum, and leads in teaching a 21st Century curriculum of inquiry, problem solving and content creation.

Models for Success:

The best school libraries are fully integrated into the P-12 learning experience and are building/district wide phenomenon, reaching into every classroom and students’ home. The school librarian is a true partner with every teacher and administrator in providing the best possible learning experience for each child. Information literacy is recognized as a critical aspect of every student’s education.

Recommendations:

The Board of Regents and State Education Department should formulate policy and regulation that will:

- Create a statewide Pre-K-16 information fluency curriculum framework that will provide equitable access to information skills instruction, tied to the success of meeting the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards. ([www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards))

- Mandate an elementary school librarian in every school to strengthen instructional leadership in meeting the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards, and enforce library staffing regulations in all public schools.

- Encourage school districts to actively promote access to the school library collection of online resources and e-books available 24/7 and 365 days a year to create learning and enrichment opportunities beyond the school day.

- Create incentives to open school libraries evenings, weekends and summers to encourage year-round learning.
**Academic and Research Libraries**

Academic libraries are the engines that support teaching, research, and collaboration on campus. They provide core support for faculty and student research, development offices, campus Information Technologies and alumni, and are leaders in the digitization of research resources and the creation of content. Academic libraries are increasingly challenged by digital rights management and digital curation issues, costs of online research resources, and copyright.

Models for Success:

The best institutions of higher learning understand that their libraries are the heart of intellectual inquiry. Though a great many resources are digitally available to students, faculty and researchers wherever their location, the Library building is a place of collaborative learning, free ranging intellectual discourse, cultural expression and, of course, historically important materials.

Recommendations:

The Board of Regents and State Education Department should formulate policy and regulation that will encourage:

- The development of a statewide/national cloud library of shared use, freely accessible digitized books and research materials through the *Hathi Trust* ([http://www.hathitrust.org/](http://www.hathitrust.org/)) and similar organizations.

- The acceleration of digitization of special collections and their integration into curricula; and making those materials freely available for research.

- The publication of academic research generated by faculty that would be universally available at no cost to the user.

- Leadership in the preservation of digitized resources and advocacy for open access and reduced copyright restrictions in the support of digital preservation.

- The continuation and strengthening of collaborations with other communities in support of life-long learning, information literacy and research.
Public Libraries

Public libraries provide services that cannot be replicated elsewhere. They represent citizens’ rights to free and equal access to information, a right now under duress with the development of for-profit information services; providing a guide through a maze of misinformation for the average citizen. They are a beacon of early childhood literacy, a center for each community’s history and culture, a key to the American dream for immigrants, and much more. The public values its libraries, and desires more business hours; more traditional resources such as children’s programs and hard-cover books; and more e-resources such as electronic books that can be read on hand-held devices.

The quality of public library service remains unequal across the state. Reasons for this include community wealth, legal structure and lack of political support.

Models for Success:

Public libraries reflect the highest ideals of the communities they serve. The best public libraries are places where the love of learning is instilled at the youngest age and intellectual curiosity encouraged for all. They provide a path to navigate life’s challenges and welcome new Americans. As community centers they actively encourage civic engagement and cultural awareness while remembering the past by the preservation of community history. Their success is grounded in their basis as a truly democratic institution, governed and supported by the people they serve.

Recommendations:

The Board of Regents and State Education Department should formulate policy and regulation that will encourage:

- The further proliferation of the Regents’ Public Library District Model (www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/pldtools/index.html) to require all public libraries to become fully funded and governed through citizen participation and public vote.

- All public libraries to proactively create and collect local content and serve as a catalyst for civic engagement to promote civil discourse and confront society’s most difficult problems.

- Collaboration with other libraries and community organizations to develop seamless information literacy initiatives, promote cultural understanding and protect local historical and cultural treasures.

- The provision of robust early childhood education programs and the designation of homework help as a core service; the alignment of outreach services with societal priorities, such as teen services/gang prevention.
Special Libraries (Medical, Historical, Law, etc.)

Special librarians are invaluable because of their mastery of particular information content; they are charged with the provision of evidence-based, reliable, high quality information in a cost effective way. Historical and museum libraries face special challenges with regard to the digitization, conservation, and preservation of special collections.

Models for Success:

Professionally managed and dedicated to the sharing of information, the best special libraries offer unique collections and expertise of enormous value to the social, intellectual and economic life of our state.

Recommendations:

The Board of Regents and State Education Department should formulate policy and regulation that will encourage:

- Making special library collections available to other libraries and the public.
- Collaboration with other libraries in the development of statewide licensing of electronic data bases and e-resources; participate in a state cloud library/digital repository.
- Innovation in the creation of new services such as the deployment of systems for intelligent processing and correlation of large sets of data to discover patterns.
- The collaborative development of consistent, cost-effective digital preservation strategies.
New York State Library Systems

Library systems were created to equalize library services across New York, but are not currently being funded by the state to meet even minimum service needs. Systems provide documented economies of scale, but costs continue to rise and new services are in demand. Library systems should assist their members to adapt more quickly to new user expectations, provide professional development and training opportunities to system members, encourage and prepare staff to be at the forefront of innovation, consider changes in governance, mergers, and collaborations, and should collaborate more with the New York State Library/Division of Library Development. As library systems increasingly shift financial burdens onto member libraries, there is concern that richer regions of the state will come away with superior library services. Also, the new cap on property taxes will make it more difficult for library systems to assess increased member fees.

Models for Success:

The most successful library systems reflect the needs of their membership, from cooperative purchasing to shared automation services; legal advice to continuing education; collaborative digitization initiatives to shared virtual reference. They are highly responsive to changes in the marketplace and the profession and prepared to take entrepreneurial risks to bring new initiatives to their member libraries and their constituents.

Recommendations:

The Board of Regents and State Education Department should formulate policy and regulation that will encourage:

- Increasing and incentivizing collaboration among systems and with the New York State Library.
- An environment of flexible regional solutions without loss of state funding.
- Libraries and library systems to be at the forefront of technological innovation, marketing and branding, and other high-value services needed by member libraries.
- Library systems to explore greater cooperative models with their members through appropriate membership fee structures or charges for special services.
- Library systems to consider restructuring their governance and initiating partnerships for greater collaboration at the regional and state level; up to and including consolidation.
- Library systems to anticipate and develop innovative and entrepreneurial services; and discontinue out-of-date services when they no longer provide benefit to their members or the end-users.
- Public Library Systems to proactively encourage and assist their member libraries that are eligible to pursue the Regents’ Public Library District model of public governance and support.

**State Library/SED/Board of Regents**

There is a need for leadership at the state level in the areas of advocacy, collaborative acquisition and licensing of electronic resources, statewide programs, and electronic content.

Models for Success:

The most vibrant and effective State Library organizations are at the forefront of innovation, providing the leadership necessary to implement new technologies and services by leveraging statewide purchasing power and political clout to assist and encourage the advancement of all library organizations within their state. The focus is creation and development rather than simply regulation and reporting.

This model of success recognizes that libraries are essential to the educational, cultural and economic future of the state and are treated as full partners in the lifelong educational process of its citizens.

Recommendations:

The Board of Regents and State Education Department should formulate policy and regulation that will:

- Reaffirm the importance of libraries in the lives of all New Yorkers.
- Enable the New York State Library's Research Library to include its electronic resources in a statewide digital library that all New Yorkers can access remotely.
- Mandate public library trustee training similar to that required of School Boards.
- Mandate library staff training; make all Public Librarian Certificates renewable contingent upon ongoing professional development, including 10 hours of annual technology training.
- Remove regulatory and legislative restrictions to intersystem and statewide cooperative purchasing negotiations while empowering the State Library/Division of Library Development to take the lead in negotiating statewide licensing for e-resources.
- The Board of Regents should task the New York State Library and the state’s library systems to develop statewide delivery infrastructure and to investigate the need for a statewide union catalog.

- Lobby for legislative protection against filtering and other forms of censorship.

- Require the State Library to continuously review and update outdated standards, guidelines, and regulations. Provide clear and relevant standards, guidelines, and regulations designed to improve library services.

- Provide legal assistance for public libraries seeking district library status.

- Create incentives for collaboration, innovation, and shared services among systems. Encourage and reward best practices throughout the state.

- Direct the State Library to develop appropriate training, including the areas of advocacy and development, to be required for all boards and advisory councils to improve governance of libraries and library systems.

- Fully fund the State Library as a part of the State Education Department and as an essential component of the State’s educational infrastructure.

- Recognize the Board of Regents’ responsibility for its role as statewide library advocate, and avoid viewing library services only through the prism of K-12 education. Libraries and library systems of all types are essential to “to raise the knowledge, skill, and opportunity of all the people in New York”
Technology and the Information Marketplace

Libraries will have gone far past the tipping point between physical and virtual by 2020. As libraries continue to evolve into technology centers, library collections are increasingly digital. The “first sale” concept is not applied in digital products, so libraries will increasingly be leasing collections rather than owning them. To counter this, shared cloud libraries, such as those under development by the Hathi Trust, should be developed to serve as surrogate research libraries. The research community must make sure that valuable content is not locked up by commercial interests. There must be greater attention paid to the development of affordable statewide digital platforms, negotiated statewide licenses for electronic books, periodicals, research databases, and similar materials. NOVELNY must continue to grow, and libraries of all kinds must digitize local content.

Recommendations:

The Board of Regents and State Education Department should formulate policy and regulation that will encourage:

- Address copyright, licensing, and digital rights management with one firm voice.
- The growth of NOVELNY ([http://novelnewyork.org](http://novelnewyork.org)) by adding more sophisticated e-resources for statewide access.
- Identify the current costs of e-resources from all public funds to best determine economies of shared acquisition and use across all schools, libraries, public universities, and state government agencies.
- Develop a common statewide e-book platform and address the particularly high costs of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) data bases.
- Brand all e-content to demonstrate libraries’ value to remain visible and relevant to end users wherever they may be.
- Anticipate and participate in the development of single, virtual libraries that serve all.
Sustaining our Libraries

The genesis of this planning project was the recognition that new state aid was not probable in the near future for libraries. However, it is hoped that this report to the Regents makes clear that libraries cannot be sustained and continue to be responsive to the needs of our state’s citizens without eventual increases in financial support. The visible and vocal support of the Board of Regents is essential to the success of this effort.

While many of these recommendations do not require additional funds, some do. When the economic recovery arrives in New York State, aid to libraries should be fully restored and additional funds allocated to further these recommendations. We trust these recommendations will also serve as the basis for specific legislative proposals from the Board of Regents and library advocacy organizations to build a foundation of success for our libraries over the next decade.
Members of the Regents Advisory Council on Libraries, as of October 1, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone/Fax</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Hammond</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Northern New York Library Network</td>
<td>(315) 265-1119; Fax (315) 265-1881</td>
<td>john @ nnyln.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sara Kelly Johns</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Instructor, Mansfield Univ. School Library and Information Technology Program</td>
<td>67 Canaras Ave. Saranac Lake, NY 12983</td>
<td>(518) 891-2339 (Phone and Fax)</td>
<td>skjohns @ gmail.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John P. Monahan</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Four Corners Road</td>
<td>Warwick, NY 10990</td>
<td>(914) 850-6300</td>
<td>monahanjohn349 @ gmail.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sharon E. Orienter</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Doyle Marketing Communications</td>
<td>116 Browncroft Blvd. Rochester, NY 14609-7832</td>
<td>(585) 288-8076</td>
<td>seo2 @ rochester.rr.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jill Hurst-Wahl</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>P.O. Box 2964 Syracuse, NY 13220</td>
<td>(315) 243-4403</td>
<td>Hurst @ HurstAssociates.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Timothy V. Johnson</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Librarian for Africana Studies, Anthropology &amp; Food Science</td>
<td>New York University Libraries 70 Washington Square Park New York, NY 10012-1091</td>
<td>(212) 998-2436</td>
<td>timothy.johnson @ nyu.edu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Mary Muller</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>207 Second St. Troy, NY 12180</td>
<td>(518) 274-0846</td>
<td>mullers @ mac.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bridget Quinn-Carey</td>
<td>2013*</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer, Queens Library</td>
<td>89-11 Merrick Blvd. Jamaica, NY 11432</td>
<td>(718) 990-8596</td>
<td>bridget.quinn-carey @ queenslibrary.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Norman J. Jacknis</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>39 Mountainside Trail Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567</td>
<td>(703) 484-6756</td>
<td>norm @ jacknis.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Steven M. Manning</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Director, Regional Information Center / Computer Services Center</td>
<td>Greater Southern Tier BOCES Regional Information Center 459 Philo Road Elmira, NY 14903</td>
<td>(607) 795-5338</td>
<td>smanning @ gstboces.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Gerald Nichols</td>
<td>2012**</td>
<td>Director, Palmer Institute for Public Library Organization and Management</td>
<td>Long Island University; C.W. Post Campus 720 Northern Blvd. Brookville, NY 11548-1300</td>
<td>(516) 299-2867; Fax (516) 299-4168</td>
<td>Gerald.Nichols @ liu.edu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Louise S. Sherby</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Hunter College Libraries, Room E-115A 695 Park Avenue New York, NY 10065</td>
<td>lsherby @ hunter.cuny.edu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chair
** Vice Chair
Staff

Jeffrey W. Cannell, Deputy Commissioner for
Cultural Education and Acting State Librarian
(518) 474-5223
E-mail: jcannell @ mail.nysed.gov

John Brock, Associate in School Library
Services
(518) 474-5922
E-mail: jbrock @ mail.nysed.gov

Loretta Ebert, Director, New York State
Library
(518) 473-1189
E-mail: lebert @ mail.nysed.gov

Joanne Shawhan, Associate in School Library
Services
(518) 474-5922
E-mail: jshawhan @ mail.nysed.gov

Carol A. Desch, Coordinator of Statewide
Library Services
(518) 486-4862; fax (518) 486-5254
E-mail: edesch @ mail.nysed.gov