Consortia Purchasing: The Himmelfarb Experience

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Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library
Himmelfarb Faced Typical Problems

- Diverse collection
- Tracking costs and licenses
- Providing 24/7 access from any location
- Growing number of training issues
- New programs often competed
- Declining budgetary support
- Increasing costs—hardware and software
Graph 2

Himmelfarb had a clear direction

- More electronic resources
- More access to electronic resources
The Usual Approaches

- Justified electronic resource need through library survey
- Requested additional funding
- Approached local foundations and worked with the Development Office
- With faculty and resident input, reassessed the collections and cut remaining low use titles
Range of Solutions

- Internal partnerships
- Informal partnerships
- Piggyback partnerships
- Formal, outside partnerships
Internal Partnerships
Mutual commitment to non-restrictive, non-exclusive licensing agreements based on:

- 1 contiguous campus with 12 schools
- 1 set of IP ranges (including all subnets)
- All e-resources are available campus-wide
Gelman (continued...)  

- Mutual agreement to post all e-resources to the WRLC union list of e-resources  
  - All disciplines are available in one location  
  - Access to health sciences materials in the Electronic Title Finder  
  - Access to electronic resources from off-campus 24/7 through proxy server
Commitment to joint purchases whenever reasonable.

- Success with Dekker, ACS, Academic collections
- Success with individual titles such as PNAS, Web of Science, BIOSIS
- Success with trade-off database purchases
Implications of Gelman partnership

- Himmelfarb successfully allied with another WRLC institution to split database costs for SportsDiscus And CINAHL
- Gelman and Himmelfarb committed to work on a single e-reserves system
- Gelman and Himmelfarb were able to present a united front on information technology issues
Gelman Impact

- Himmelfarb staff practiced negotiation skills extensively
- Justified contribution to entire University
- Asked to participate in planning for e-resources
ISS

- Banner integration
- Proxy server test
- Wireless LAN
Informal Partnerships
Reference staff began teaching a session on health sciences resources in the Legal Research class.

Result in increased access to legal collection for our students.

Himmelfarb able to decrease medico-legal purchases.
Children’s National Medical Center Library (Affiliate)

- All specialty pediatric materials purchased by CNMC library
- Himmelfarb only purchases basic pediatric materials
- Charge each other photocopy rates
- Use e-delivery for materials or share space on the Biomedical Communications delivery truck
Piggyback Partnerships
WRLC

- Initially, seen as academic only
- Electronic resource management
- Electronic resource access— one place, off-campus
- Invited to share costs with other institutions
- URL: www.wrlc.org
Issue of Autonomy

- Terrific University Librarian. Non-territorial.
- Each library understands to whom they report and who provides the bulk of their budgets.
- Balance of power.
University joined ARL

Himmelfarb key in process

Benefit: Associated with NERL

Outcome: Twice discounted membership in BioMedCentral!
Formal, Outside Partnerships
The stage was set

Among academic libraries, the WRLC provided a model for cooperative technology solutions and collection development.
Stage (continued…)

- Among health sciences libraries:
  - Greater cooperation among institutions
  - 3 new academic health sciences library directors in last 5 years
  - Past history of cooperation in other areas
  - Everyone else had caught up!
Washington-Baltimore Health Sciences Library Consortium

- Members:
  - George Washington University
  - Georgetown University
  - Howard University
  - MedStar: Washington Hospital Center, 4 Baltimore Hospitals
  - AAMC
  - CNMC
  - ACOG
Negotiations

- Among ourselves
- With vendor
Among Ourselves

- Institutions at the table normally serious competitors
- Several of us already had good contracts with Ovid—less at stake
- Two partners eager to sign on—no Ovid resources
- Entire process lengthy, nerve-wracking
Issues

- Determining shares: # of beds? # of students? Amount of prior usage? Amount of prior bills? Combination?
- Textbook selection very contentious
- Timing
- How to pay
Negotiations with Vendor

- Ovid a good negotiating partner—made multiple presentations, business proposals, revisions, extended contracts

- They stood to gain 2 major new accounts and expand scope of 5 current accounts
Personnel Involved

- Negotiations: our director with support of accountant and VP for Educational Resources

- Implementation: Electronic Resources Coordinator
Advantages to Himmelfarb

- Maintained our core database set
- Greatly increased our number of seats
- Provided access to Books@Ovid
- Expanded our list of online journals
- Finally, something electronic for nurses
- Able to implement OpenLinks
- Were willing to work so that new resources integrated into WRLC framework
- Lots of Ovid support for training, customization
Through Consortium

- Ovid Core Biomedical Collection
- Ovid Collections II and III
- Ovid Nursing Collections I and II
- 27 textbooks
- EBM Review set
- CINAHL
- AMED
- MEDLINE/CancerLit/HealthStar
Individual Negotiations

- BMJ Clinical Evidence
- 30 individual journal titles
- HAPI
Sustainability

- We shall see?!
- Diverse set of institutions.
- Dependent on institutional budget processes.
- Need a more formal structure.
- Share determination process still under discussion.
Conclusions

- Benefits clear—more resources out of same budget
- Need to get out of library and learn what everybody else is doing—inside and outside GW
- Can’t be afraid to step up, ask questions, volunteer
- Takes lots of time to forge good relationships
- Finding unique partners make the difference; scan your horizon for potential alliances
- Not all ventures will be successful
New Consortia Challenges

- Request to include Himmelfarb’s holdings in WRLC catalog
  - Don’t participate in consortium loan service
  - If we go ahead how will entries make our position clear to users?

- Development of an Electronic Resources Policy to guide future acquisitions and negotiations
This presentation is available at:

http://www.gwumc.edu/library/about/posters/using_consortia_to_expand_econtent.pdf