Library West Commons – Phase I

Close Out Report
November 22, 2002

Presented by:
Library West Commons Core and Sub Project Teams
Georgia Institute of Technology
Document Control

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Project Highlights

1.1 Project Summary

The Library West Commons (LWC) creates a learning environment where skilled staff from the Library and Office of Information Technology converge into one service point to provide expertise in computing, instructional technology, and information proficiencies. An adjacent production center, densely equipped with workstations, enhances students’ individual and collaborative learning experiences by combining comprehensive information resources with cutting-edge technology. Lessons learned in the LWC will inform the design and implementation of the future Innovative Learning Resource Center (ILRC).

1.2 Project Overview

The Dean and Director of Libraries supplied goals to help direct the work of the project:

- Improve existing technology offerings to students through a multi-faceted teaching and learning resource
- Inspire learning by increasing students’ ability to develop and present technologically enhanced projects
- Provide qualified, cost-effective technical and application support to faculty and students to support the teaching and learning mission of the Institute.
- Centralize support to ensure continuity, consistency and reliability of campus high-technology investments.
- Maintain a team to effectively coordinate information resources and pedagogical technology requirements with advanced computing and networking
- Provide a site with support for appropriate and creative uses of multi-media.
- Lessons learned in the Library West Commons will inform the design and program of the Innovative Learning Resource Center.

In several years, Georgia Tech will embark on the detailed design and construction of an ILRC that embodies Georgia Tech’s commitment to the enhancement of undergraduate teaching and learning experience. The success of this endeavor requires cultural changes that effectively merge leading-edge library, information technology, and instructional services. The LWC project will result in valuable lessons and insights that will aid in the design and implementation of the IRLC.

The LWC is an important step in the direction for defining the vision for the ILRC. The Library and Office of Information Technology collaborated to provide consolidated services in the LWC areas, supported by a service desk with highly qualified staff with expertise in computing, instructional technology, and library services. The LWC houses up to 100 computers for general purpose and multimedia use.
A core oversight project team was organized to plan, design, and implement the project vision, schedule, support services, budget constraints, and address related organizational issues. The team remained fully engaged in all detailed planning, design, and implementation work associated with the LWC.

1.3 Project Significant Milestones

The following is an overview of the project significant milestones:

- June 2001 – LWC Sponsors were identified as follow:
  - Richard Meyer, Library
  - Jim Consuegra, OIT

- June 2001 – LWC Core Oversight Project team members were identified as follow:
  - Beverly Henderson, Project Lead/OIT
  - Mike Brandon, Project Support/OIT
  - Crit Stuart, Project Lead & Library
  - Bruce Henson, Library
  - Katherine Norris, Library
  - Craig Outlaw, OIT
  - Tony Gilmer, OIT

- June 2001 – LWC Core Construction Project team members were identified as follow:
  - Richard Meyer, Sponsor, Library
  - Jim Consuegra, Sponsor, OIT
  - Crit Stuart, Project Lead from Library
  - Beverly Henderson, Project Lead from OIT
  - Mike Brandon, Project Support from OIT
  - Craig Outlaw, ET
  - Kevin Pittman, ET
  - Sam Rundles, P&P
  - Katherine Norris, Library
  - Brian Clarke, Facilities
  - Greg Lacy, OIT
  - Scott Riggle, OIT
  - Bill Lawrence, OIT
  - Garry Lockerman, Library
  - Steve Ceppo, Facilities


December 31, 2001 – Functionality of LWC completed enough to assist in the assessment and design process by Facilities. (July 1 – December 31)

January 17, 2002 – Dr. Jean-Lou Chameau gave approval to proceed with LWC project based on funding requirements.


January 24, 2002 – Official Bid process started.

February 13, 2002 – Site visit to Emory’s Library Commons.

March 26, 2002 – Award Process completed (Sycamore Contractors, Inc, Mr. Bart Moores, Owner).

March 27, 2002 – Official construction started on the LWC.

April 1, 2002 – LWC Operational Project Sub Team Leaders were identified as follow:

- Linda Cabot, CS
- Tony Gilmer, ET
- Theresa Johnson, OIT
- Susan Coleman, Lib
- Bruce Henson, LIB
- Team representatives from CETL, OIT, Library

April 4, 2002 – Project Sub Teams started their individual work.

July 15, 2002 – Construction completed and turned over to customer.

July 26, 2002 – Furniture installation completed.

July 29, 2002 – Networking components completed.

July 31, 2002 – Server components completed.

July 31, 2002 – Computer systems installation completed.

August 19, 2002 – Official opening of LWC.

November 20, 2002 - Project Management Responsibility Transfer.

- Close Out Report
- Project Documentation Manuals
Rollover Tasks/Activities

The following lists are items that have been identified as rollover tasks to the daily operations in the LWC:

2.1 Technical Rollover Tasks/Activities

- will develop technical and non-technical operational procedures and processes. (Contact: Tony Gilmer)
- will setup a software repository area in the Technical Workroom. (Contact: Tony Gilmer)
- will move and install the server rack in the Technical Server Room. (Contact: Tony Gilmer)
- will prove on-going technical support to the LWC. (Contact: Tony Gilmer)
- will maintain on-line documentation for the LWC. (Contact: Tony Gilmer)
- will investigate, purchase, and document appropriate site licenses for Adobe Acrobat and Secure CRT. (Contact: Tony Gilmer)

2.2 Non-Technical Rollover Tasks/Activities

- LWC Advisory Council – (Contact: Crit Stuart)
- LWC Working Advisory Groups – (Contact: Crit Stuart)
- On-going LWC Staff meetings (OIT/Library) – (Contact: Bruce Henson/Tony Gilmer)
- From Career Path subgroup: (Contact: Bruce Henson)
  - Formalize staff career path
  - Create joint OIT/Library position
- Joint staffing of third shift with OIT/Library – (Contact: Bruce Henson/Tony Gilmer)
- Implementation of data gathering/surveys – (Contact: Bruce Henson/Tony Gilmer)
3.1 LWC Team 1 – Furniture/Workstations

1. Expect furniture design and manufacturing to take at least six months. Ensure that this time frame is embedded into the master timeline and never put off furniture until the last moment.

2. On any future project of this magnitude, try at all costs to build a dedicated team that will not be split among multiple projects at key times. Look at PeopleSoft and Campus Pipeline implementations for ideas.

3. Involve Students and Faculty in facility design as early as possible. Plan for turnover in your student and faculty representatives and be ready to find new ones when necessary.

4. Use the contractor – client approach: get the sponsors (client) to provide firm specifications in writing and do not let them change the specifications along the way without penalty. Make sure that all parties involved have the same set of specifications and understand exactly what the sponsors expect.

5. Equipment, when delivered, should be locked up immediately. No equipment should be deployed without first being inventoried. No equipment should be placed into service if security devices are not in place. Where possible, surveillance cameras should be installed and operational before really expensive equipment is deployed.

6. If "loaner" equipment is used from a vendor, an inventory list should be presented by the vendor and signed for at the time of delivery. This equipment should also be locked away and secured as normal when deployed.

7. Cable management should not be done until all equipment is in place. And once undertaken, cable management solutions should be determined and tested, with clear prototypes defined, before individuals start the work. Ad-libbing doesn’t work well.

8. Be absolutely informed about GT policy / procedure regarding purchase of furniture before making contact with vendors.

9. If possible, involve an appropriate representative from Campus Facilities in the process (our good fortune was to bring in Nicole Galea).

10. If possible, include campus experts in furniture ergonomics and facilities design when planning a furniture installation. (individuals from College of Architecture were helpful in this venture).
11. While the group charged with selecting furniture might be large, use only a few representatives to directly interact with furniture vendor in planning and selection. Our core group was never more than 5 individuals, and this worked well.

12. At appropriate intervals, inform project sponsors of progress. As we had an idea of the tables and chairs we were inclined to select, a key individual (myself) reviewed progress with sponsors so that there were no surprises / rejection when the committee was ready to proceed with a purchase. Keeping the sponsors informed about presumed cost is also important. We had a naïve, preliminary budget that was significantly exceeded. By informing the sponsor of what was clearly going to be a significant cost overrun, he could decide at this earlier stage whether to approve or send us "back to the drawing board".

13. Go into furniture planning / selection process with a very clear set of goals: ergonomic features and other creature comforts, critical dimensions, management of wires and cabling, space considerations, etc.. If we had gone in without any expectations, rather like "green horns", and relied completely on the "wisdom" of the vendor, we'd not have done as well. Put more simply, do homework and accelerated learning when faced with a task that is unfamiliar. We knew almost nothing about furniture going into the process. We did homework by writing to other managers of information commons and by talking to campus experts. This was beneficial and helped to keep us focused. Caveat: even though I advocate "sticking to your vision / principles", still attempt to benefit from the insight / experience of the vendor. The vendor will frequently have break-through suggestions that are an improvement over your own assumptions. Our ultimate furniture selection was significantly improved by the vendor's suggestions.

14. If possible, bring the selected vendor into the proposed site, and provide as much information as possible to help them understand the culture and expectations of the users of the furniture / installation. The vendor may harbor assumptions that are incorrect. Spend appropriate time with the vendor so that there are no unspoken assumptions or mis-understandings. Communication is 90 % of the game.

15. Because we were 2 cultures (OIT and Library) with our particular assumptions that were at times different, also work closely with the selection team to understand each other's cultures / assumptions. By doing so, you reduce time-consuming quibbling / arguing in the company of the vendor. This is a big component of "doing one's homework in advance".

16. Set precise timetables for furniture arrival and installation if timing is crucial. Our deadline was tight, and we were clear about our expectations from this start. We were also extraordinarily lucky that our vendor was extremely motivated to please us. Our project was an important showcase for the vendor, and they were determined to make us happy. Creating buy-in and excitement in the vendor can benefit outcome.
17. When deliberating furniture purchases, be sure to follow State guidelines. In our case, be sure to involve Campus interior designer, Purchasing and Contract Administrator (Facilities Project Manager) who will dictate how to proceed with vendors. Better to have one meeting with all who would bid to “keep it fair” (example: our confusion over how to work with the 6 approved furniture vendors)

3.2 LWC Team 2 – Server & Hub Electronics and Software/Equipment Repairs and Maintenance

1. Greater attention should be paid to selecting appropriate team members who have designated responsibilities on the team.

2. Some items assigned to our team were not appropriate to our original scope – e.g., building the image. Other items were poorly identified and described. It would have been helpful if the major tasks and milestones had been provided as part of the charge to the team.

3. We did not feel that we had sufficient time and resources for testing the images and we have continued to pursue testing after the implementation was complete and operations mode begun. Since the image is updated, we should have an ongoing solution for testing new images. Problems remain with the software included in the image. The listing currently on the LWC documentation pages is incorrect. It is desirable for the software listing to serve as a guide to what is included in the image. There are also issues involving Adobe Acrobat and Secure CRT licenses that need to be resolved and documented.

3.3 LWC Team 3 – Staffing/Services/Measures & Assessment/Customer Needs

1. Share at beginning of project any assumptions/decisions already made with regard to staffing.

2. Integrate into a project of this size, at least 2 weeks 'safety net/lag' time.

3. Begin identifying base line training needs by topic area earlier in project.

4. Task sponsors with providing written/formal feedback on recommendations.

5. Limit participation on project teams to realistic numbers (6-8 optimal).

6. More historical information on how the project came into being--where we are on the path to implementation.

7. More latitude to creatively address the future ILRC.
8. More time to address inhibitors/perceptions from team members - tendency is to get the job done and not address the emotional side of task until it rises to the surface and task misses the goal.

9. The importance of regular communications and the need for more. The challenges of finding the right mode of communication to meet all needs.

10. The challenges of the right hand knowing what the left hand is doing another communications issue. E.g. ensure adequate communication between subgroups - e.g. LWC-CS Assessment Team wanted touch screen monitors but that didn't get built into the hardware budget or order.

11. Ensure that everybody understands what it will take to implement any recommendations and who will be responsible for this implementation - i.e. is a subgroup just to make the recommendation or also to provide for its implementation (LWC-CS Assessment Team survey is an example). Lack of a clear understanding of who has the authority to make final decisions and what the decision-making process is.

12. Keep groups/teams small but diverse.

13. The need for “nuts and bolts” meetings for the LWC Operations group and not just planning meetings (like the affinity meeting). However, we don’t want these to become or be perceived as complaint sessions.

14. The need for more training and the necessity to define a skill set.

15. At times, staff are feeling demoralized because they had a confidence that they could answer all or most questions that were asked at the old Reference desk and now lack that confidence at the Information Services desk (“it’s a shock to the system”).

16. There is not always someone available to answer all the questions that arise and students are frustrated. In most cases, the staff is used to being able to give an immediate response rather than making the customer wait.

17. There is a need for more OIT staffing at certain times of the day and days of the week, particularly evenings and weekends. Shannon and Joel have been particularly effective because of their skills set and their consistent schedule need more like them.

18. It may be more amenable to OIT Customer Service staff to work smaller blocks of time, rather than 8-hour blocks might make the experience more appealing and provide some consistency.
19. Even though we don’t want it to happen, there tends to be a Reference and IT side of the desk. Students sometimes have to wait in both lines to ultimately get assistance, which can be frustrating. If the staff person takes ownership of the question and suggests that they will get back to the student once the IT person is free, the staff person may not be able to articulate the question to the IT person as well as the student. Do we need a “take a number” system?

20. Merging of the two cultures has been positive and challenging. We need to continue to develop our relationship, including lunch gatherings and other ways to get to know one another.

21. OIT, Library, CETL have learned a lot from one another. The positive reception to the LWC and increased campus visibility have exceeded our expectations. “Success breeds success.”

22. The importance of public relations and the need for more of it, including an open house for faculty.

23. Noise level has been low and the students have handled queuing well and without staff intervention.

3.4 LWC Team 4 - Leadership

1. Successful outcomes to projects arise from teams that minimize complication and problems, and maximize the opportunities for each person to contribute her / his best ideas and efforts. Successful collaborations are grounded in mutual trust, understanding, honesty, inclusiveness, and superb communication. Leadership must insure these attributes are in place, and sustained for the duration of a project.

2. When building teams, consider the known talents of each individual. Always strive to couple an individual with the “best match” in assignment / responsibility. When assignments seem out-of-sync, quickly act to provide the individual an opportunity that better matches the individual’s talents.

3. Do not ignore malcontents or trouble-makers, or individuals who lack the skills needed to do the job they’re asked to do. Intervene swiftly to apply corrective solutions. Ignoring problems does not make them go away. Everyone looks to leadership to recognize problems and take corrective action. And when providing the “solution”, always strive to “save face” for the individual who is in the “hot seat”.

4. Sometimes a sponsor may work on elements of the project “outside” of the organized channels. The results of this work must be effectively communicated back to the group for assimilation, otherwise uneasiness can arise about “what decisions are being made that otherwise relate to the work I or my team are
supposed to be handling?” It is leadership’s responsibility to make sure effective communication from-and-to the sponsors is effectively coordinated.

5. Leadership’s #1 priority is to keep everyone informed, in timely ways and via appropriate media and venues, of all progress, interruptions, issues, etc., affecting the project. Lapses in communication immediately affect the “health” of the project.

6. Be sure that teams are not unduly influenced or swayed by sponsors or others as they work on their tasks. If teams or individuals are charged to come up with solutions or to work on particular assignments, trust them to do so. Interference should be minimized, and trust maximized. If assumptions arise for management, they must share them with the team as appropriate.

7. We were smart to have leadership supply from its own member’s liaisons to working teams. This took the form of “facilitators” who kept the teams focused, and assisted the team leaders. In the future, liaisons from leadership (Core Team) might not have to be official “facilitators”, but the benefits of having them planted on each team (communication back to Core for continuity, ability to answer questions for the working groups in a timely manner, etc.), outweigh leaving the teams to their own devices.

8. When projects are “collaborations” of two or more cultures, take the time to acquaint each culture with the other. Identify differences and similarities, and create an appreciation for what each brings to the project. Exercises and opportunities that break down barriers and create understanding and familiarity benefit the team. This is time well spent.

9. Do not send out announcements or publicity inconsistent with team expectations. Put another way, consider the “impact” or “fallout” of all communications in advance of making them. Try to provide information that is helpful and not disruptive. And be open rather than withholding.

10. Do not make single individuals responsible for major tasks or deliverables for which the outcome is critical. From time to time, individuals will underestimate what is required to deliver a component / responsibility. Where there is a perceived problem with delivery, intervene to provide appropriate support.

11. For complex projects with a big technology component, there should be both hardware and software teams. The hardware team is responsible not only for ordering equipment but coordinating with the software team to ensure that versions of operating systems, servers, printers and software work with each other. Testing should be carefully structured, given higher priority, and carefully managed. When technologies are new or untested, lots of time should be devoted to testing, etc..
12. Make clear whether teams are responsible for recommendations only, or for recommendations and implementation. When “squeezing into” another phase or project (as was our case . . . LWC being a component of reorganization of Library services), transition may be smoother if the same teams are charged with both projects. This keeps otherwise disparate projects “in sync”.

13. Individuals need to understand their stake in a project in order to ensure maximum participation.

3.5 LWC Special Technical Support – OIT/EIS Windows Support Team

1. Join the project from the ground floor to improve the overall goals & plans to meet the customers needs.
2. Define the reporting hierarchy for all to understand their roles and responsibilities to whom.
3. Establish working relationship with all team members to eliminate overlapping or duplicate efforts.
4. Obtain clear requirements from the customer to deliver desired results.
5. Review current infrastructure and obtain a clear-cut understanding of the planned architecture, the dependencies and how they interface. Build into the project plan.
6. Establish regular communications between the customer and suppliers to ensure needs & expectations are being met and on-schedule.
7. Build in time to negotiate any concerns/problems so all parties can be successful meeting the project’s overall goals.

Memo of Understanding
Library West Commons

Introduction: The Library West Commons (LWC) is an important collaboration between the Library and the Office of Information Technology to define the vision and the design of the Integrated Learning Resource Center (ILRC). This memo of understanding outlines the essential service, funding, leadership and governance elements that will sustain the endeavor, mitigate confusion and conflict, and clarify responsibilities of the parties to assure uninterrupted success.

Teamwork and governance: Immediate leadership of the LWC is shared between the Library’s Head of Information Services Department and OIT’s Liaison for LWC Support. These individuals: promote cross-cultural understanding and reduce the negative effects of cultural differences between OIT and the Library; reduce “turf ownership” and exclusivity; coordinate centralized support in the LWC for consistency, continuity and reliability; and reduce service failures due to confusion of responsibility.

An Advisory Council monitors the convergence of technical, informational, instructional and research support; assists with the development of procedures and policies; and the appointment and facilitation of teams to create needed services.
LWC operations teams, composed of volunteer Library, OIT and CETL staff, monitor critical aspects of service, facilities, technology infrastructure and assessment. These teams are: Staff development & leadership; Customer relations; and Facilities / asset management. The teams are self-managed, facilitated by a member of Advisory Council, and are accountable to the dual leaders of the LWC.

The Library Associate Director for Public Services and the OIT Executive Director for Daily Operations facilitate the work of the dual leaders and that of the Advisory Council.

The Dean and Director of Libraries and the Associate Vice Provost / Associate Vice President for Information Technology are sponsors of the LWC and provide strategic direction, support at the Institute executive level, funding and organizational support as well as a vital connection to all Georgia Tech constituencies affected by the LWC.

**Partner responsibilities:** The LWC project represents a genuine collaboration between OIT’s Educational Technologies and Customer Support units (on one hand), and the Public Services and Systems divisions of the Library (on the other).

**OIT**

OIT provides a Liaison for LWC Support who is housed in the LWC. OIT also finances an appropriate level of staffing within the LWC in the form of undergraduate assistants, co-op students, and contributions from permanent OIT staff from various areas of the organization. Together, these staff are chiefly responsible for provision of technical and applications support to students at workstations. The level and duration of staffing contributed by OIT anticipates the technical and instructional support required by students in the LWC. Staffing in the start-up phase is a “best guess”, and may change contingent on an on-going analysis of service conducted by the LWC Customer Relations team.

OIT finances LWC workstations, servers, and productivity software (both in the productivity areas and at the Information Services desk). OIT strives to keep 100 % of workstations, peripherals and servers in operation at all times, and provides back-up machines and an escalated solution path for equipment that is not easily repaired.

OIT finances and provides technical experts in a timely manner from inside and outside OIT to maintain workstations and servers, and to trouble-shoot and develop solutions.

OIT finances software for both LWC student production, and for systems support, that are appropriate to the needs of students using the LWC, and in accordance with Student Computer Ownership committee standards. The various software at standard and multimedia workshop workstations are upgraded in a timely manner to satisfy student emerging needs as identified and agreed-to by both parties.

OIT finances basic LWC consumables like printing paper and toner.

**Library**
The Library finances trained staff at the Information Services desk to sustain service every hour the Library is open. The Head of Information Services department is housed in the LWC, along with a complement of career information assistants. The level and duration of staffing contributed by the Library anticipates the information support, and to a lesser degree, the technical support required by students in the LWC. By Fall 2003 the Library expects to operate the LWC around-the-clock. The Library assumes budgetary responsibility for hiring the additional Security and Information Services personnel to sustain the 24 / 7 environment.

The Library finances information resources that complement pedagogical technology, and multimedia and special productivity demands.

The Library provides and sustains, at its expense, a comfortable and well-maintained physical space to house the LWC, with appropriate furnishings and facilities. The Library also provides office space for the OIT Liaison for LWC Support.

**Continuing the experiment:** The LWC is an iteration of space and service in a particular moment in time, a starting point for testing ideas about space and service that promote student learning outside the classroom. The Library and OIT will identify opportunities to improve on the LWC as an experiment that informs the programming of the ILRC. This may take the form of renovating adjacent spaces, or providing training and exposure for students and faculty of the LWC’s perceived potential to support learning and emerging pedagogical technologies. New directions should be grounded in careful observation and assessment of the experiment, and informed by the direct input of students and faculty.

**Convergence and collaboration:** Sustaining a real convergence of the two staff will positively influence the service and support available in the LWC and at the Information Services desk. Leaders and Advisory Council will promote cross-unit mentoring, cross-unit participation on LWC teams, and appropriate training opportunities. New staff with “hybrid” skills appropriate to the LWC setting will be hired as opportunities arise.

Library and OIT Sponsors will work together to identify funds for renovation, equipment and furniture purchase, and to sustain appropriate levels of staffing and resources over time. Evolution of the LWC requires ongoing financial support from both partners.

**Public relations:** All announcements and communications that showcase or elaborate the LWC will be coordinated between OIT and the Library. Each partner will keep the other informed of all publicity related to the LWC. Public relations will be assisted by the Customer Relations team of the LWC, the operations team that manages public relations, assessment / measurement, and policy and procedures pertaining to the venture. Customers, staff, the university at large, funding agencies and the media-at-large will receive targeted information that is timely, focused and verifiable. All public comments, reactions and questions sent to the LWC or Library homepages will be reviewed by representatives of both units and replied-to by the most qualified individual(s).
Evaluation & assessment: In addition to regular operational reporting and assessment, a review will be undertaken in Spring 2003 to:

- review management and disposition of operational issues to date, and
- engage sponsors, contributing staff, and customers in an assessment of the effectiveness of the service

Periodic review of Memo of Understanding: The Dean and Director of Libraries and the Associate Vice Provost & Associate Vice President & CIO of OIT annually will review the conditions set forth in this Memo of Understanding. Changes to this document may be mutually agreed to at this annual review, or at any time the sponsors agree that changes or additions to the terms would be beneficial.

Rich Meyer                  John Mullin
Dean and Director of Libraries  Associate vice Provost &
                                          Associate Vice President & CIO of OIT

Final Comments

The success of the LWC Project was completely due to the work of very dedicated and cooperative Teams. Team leaders, facilitators, and members extended their support and cooperation from start to finish, including activities that fell outside the scope of the project.

Project Sign-off

Refer to the Sign-off form at the front of the document.
- Richard Meyer, Sponsor
- John Mullin, Sponsor
- LWC Core Project Leaders and Subteam Leaders