REPORT OF
ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

AURARIA LIBRARY
SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

This report is prepared in accordance with the University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement (APS) titled Implementation of Regent Policy on Program Review and the University of Colorado Denver policy titled Academic Program Review both of which require a campus program review report summarizing the outcome of the internal unit review (self-study) and the findings of the external review, as well as general observations and conclusions. UC Denver’s Program Review Panel studies each unit under review and prepares this final program review report. The objectives of the review were to identify strengths and weaknesses of the unit and to make recommendations for program improvement. A broad range of academic and administrative matters was considered including: strategic plan and its alignment with the university; academic programs; faculty activities; faculty recruitment and retention; and unit resources, services and facilities.

I. Review Process

The review consisted of 1) a self-study, conducted by the director of the library and the Shared Leadership Team; and 2) an external review conducted by two outside experts and one internal expert nationally recognized in information literacy theory, the use of information technology and networked information, and higher education administration. The external review team site visit took place on August 9 and 10, 2010, and the review team consisted of Professor Christine Bruce, Faculty of Information Sciences at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia; Dan Howard, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Colorado Denver; Linda Lang-Peralta, Interim Associate Dean of the School of Letters, Arts, and Sciences and Professor of English at the Metropolitan State College of Denver; and Joan K. Lippincott, Associate Executive Director at the Coalition for Networked Information in Washington, DC. Prior to their visit, the external reviewers were provided with the library’s self-study. During their two-day visit, the reviewers met with the library director and associate directors, library faculty, directors of Centers for Faculty Development, program leaders of First Year Experiences, campus planners, library development board members, and faculty and staff representing the three campus institutions. They also met with university administrators including Provost Roderick Nairn, Associate Vice Chancellor Marguerite Childs and others from UC Denver, Metropolitan State College and the Community College of Denver. A list of the external review team’s meetings is attached to this report.

The Program Review Panel wishes to express appreciation to the director, faculty and staff of the Auraria Library for their thoughtful and thorough self-study, and for their cooperation and active participation throughout the program review.
II. General Overview

The Auraria Library serves the teaching, learning, research, and service priorities of the three institutions served – the University of Colorado Denver, the Metropolitan State College of Denver, and the Community College of Denver. Many of the opportunities and challenges facing these institutions in coming years will be extensions of those faced today – rapid technological change, exponential knowledge growth, evolving student and faculty expectations, 20th century educational buildings, and new scholarly communication models. In response, the library must continually monitor the changing needs of faculty and students as they pursue their academic programs, create and manage collections designed to meet those needs, improve information delivery and research consultation services, integrate library instruction and resources into curriculum, and fortify access and discovery tools for scholarly and creative resources.

Access to and evaluation of authoritative information is essential to academic success. The Auraria Library, administered by the University of Colorado Denver, provides a wide range of learning resources and services to support academic programs. Digital learning materials and virtual research consultation are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Print collections, research consultation, and technology-enabled collaborative spaces are available eighty hours a week during the academic year, with slightly reduced hours during the summer.

Two years ago, the Auraria Library began an evolutionary process of co-creating a ‘new library’ based in appreciative inquiry, participatory action research, and shared leadership principles and practices. As a consequence, staffing has been re-organized, processes have been streamlined, and services have been consolidated. When individual growth was nurtured and then shared, collective learning occurred. Cross training fueled cross functional awareness and, ultimately, initiated systems thinking. New organizational efficiencies resulted. A more vibrant workplace environment now attracts grants and foundation awards and individual donations which fund continuing innovations. Consultants’ recommendations informed most of these changes. The dialogue and reflection preceding adoption occurred in the Shared Leadership Team, a new body constituted in fall semester 2008 to ensure inclusive decision making and promote organizational learning.

III. Implementation of Past Review Recommendations

The last program review process took place in 2004-05 and generated several recommendations. Comments on progress towards meeting the recommendations cover the last two years.

Recommendation: The university needs a stronger sense of “ownership” of the library; the library faculty and staff need a stronger sense of identity with the university.
Response: Since July 2008, the organizational vision, mission, values, and priorities have been reviewed annually, and an outcomes-based organizational orientation has been adopted, which purposefully aligns programs and services with University of Colorado Denver strategic plan priorities. Tri-institutional engagement has also been furthered since January 2010 when the director initiated conversations with university master planners about the status of a new library building in the Auraria campus master plan.
**Recommendation:** The Library needs an increase of $1 million for ongoing collection purchases, electronic back files; addition of new personnel; increased online reference services; and increased assessment of student and faculty needs.

**Response:** The Library continues to depend on the largesse of the three schools for its annual operating budget. In lieu of an increased collections budget, the Library negotiated favorable purchasing agreements and leveraged open source collections which increased holdings dramatically for electronic resources. In anticipation of student needs for collaborative learning spaces identified in fall 2009 needs assessment studies, a Center for Colorado and the West at Auraria Library (CC&W) was approved as an official University Center in March 2009 with the promise of multi-year funding from the Kenneth King Foundation. Half of these funds can be used to remodel library space. Unfortunately, there are 17 fewer staff due to retirements and resignations. However, all of these demonstrate that the library has adhered to the university’s 2010 directives to implement efficiencies, develop revenue sharing opportunities, and achieve savings through cuts.

**Recommendation:** The library needs a continuous, formal, and broad-based strategic planning process that addresses specifically how the Library is going to help the university achieve its aspirations; a strategic opportunity exists in the Academic Master Plan process.

**Response:** The library strategic planning process commenced in July 2008, and now, within the framework of the library’s 2008-2011 strategic plan, programmatic directions and evaluation metrics are vetted through the Shared Leadership Team. The director and associate directors regularly report to Shared Leadership Team members who, in turn, offer their operational perspectives in an inclusive, continuous decision-making and action-taking process. In addition, pro-active outreach to Metro State and CCD leaders increasingly assures alignment with their respective strategic institutional goals and aspirations.

**Recommendation:** The library has unique strengths that can help the campus achieve its aspirations, including digital institutional repositories (IR) and active instructional programs.

**Response:** The library has funded development of an institutional repository, the Alliance Digital Repository (ADR), which contained nothing until now. Digital images are now stored in ADR, through the efforts of the Center for Colorado & the West. Furthermore, a library faculty member is promoting interest in electronic theses and dissertations to be stored in the ADR. The library annually delivers over 600 classroom presentations which would benefit from more careful planning of targeting courses for these presentations.

**Recommendation:** Existing spaces need to be redesigned for collaborative learning, including print collection removal; additional breakout rooms; electrical and network upgrades; improved server and network closets; expanded computer commons; more faculty/student carrels; better temperature/humidity control; upkeep of the physical environment; adding a Faculty Reading Room.

**Response:** Recent tri-institutional planning efforts will culminate in a design charrette in September 2010, at which point a phased remodeling timeline with estimated budgets will permit private fund-raising to commence. Electrical upgrades are being investigated and UC Denver IT Services now virtually hosts library servers to address technology infrastructure needs. Spaces on the first floor have been cleared out so it can be repurposed for the Learning Commons.

**Recommendation:** Electronic should be the format of choice for collections; the library should move toward being an electronic document depository and away from purchase of micro
formats; revise the collection development policy to be more explicit about priorities; establish faculty collection advisory committees in key areas; recognize the library’s key role in providing resources for faculty and student research.

**Response:** The new Collection Development Policy makes migration to digital explicit. The library still lacks a Faculty Advisory Committee, and seeks advice on how to constitute such a tri-institutional body.

**Recommendation:** Services need to be reviewed from a perspective of how to implement ‘desk top’ delivery and how to allow users to do as much as they can for themselves.

**Response:** The library will install a self check out machine in August 2010. A website redesign project aspires to improve virtual navigation and better discovery of library owned or licensed content. Recent changes in interlibrary loan processes now permit unmediated requests.

**Recommendation:** Increase numbers of faculty and staff; collapse service points; streamline workflow; enhance promotion and tenure opportunities.

**Response:** Faculty and staff numbers have not increased, but reduction in service points has improved workflow. All tenure track librarians now either have a research focus or aspire to it.

**Recommendation:** Initiate a salary study for faculty and staff; enhance faculty/staff training; clarify how research and publication are evaluated and rewarded for Instructors and Senior Instructors.

**Response:** Three recent salary equity studies show that, on average, faculty salaries are comparable or above average. The library is committed to faculty and staff professional development with over $50,000 designated for that purpose in both FY2009 and FY2010. Also, research and publication criteria for tenure track faculty have been revised.

### IV. Summary of Self-Study

#### Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Plan

The mission of the Auraria Library is to foster intellectual growth, academic success, and lifelong learning for the students, faculty, and staff of Auraria’s diverse urban campus, and the vision is to be the heart of the learning experience. Values include intellectual freedom, service, inclusivity, collaboration, and stewardship. The Auraria Library Strategic Plan details evidence-based accomplishments, including evaluation processes, for 2008 through 2011.

#### Academic Programs and Educational Experience

In the past two years, Auraria Library faculty and staff have evolved a comprehensive understanding of how all service groups contribute to student learning. An explicit focus on student learning and faculty teaching among library faculty and staff is furthered both in cross organizational Shared Leadership Team agendas, as well as Open Forum and service group meetings. In keeping with the library’s increasingly evidence-based decision making culture, reports are often delivered on ‘best practices’ from conference attendance, librarians’ studies of user population characteristics, and literature review highlights informing task group recommendations.

The assumptions underlying current practices in the instructional program deserve comprehensive reconsideration. Longstanding relationships between librarians and faculty ensure a regular request for library instruction, consequently the most library research intensive
courses have not been identified for potential pilot projects which could embed/integrate library resources and research proficiencies into curriculum. Therefore common practices need to be examined and possibly changed.

The traditional role of ‘library as space’ has been transformed into a learning spaces initiative, which promises to support formal and informal learning enabled by collaborative furniture, productivity software, accessible scholarly resources, and integrated support services. This parallels the changing roles of the institutions the library serves, such as Metropolitan State College’s recent authorization to deliver graduate degree programs.

**Faculty Activities**

The library has 24 faculty members: one professor, one associate professor, six assistant professors and 16 instructors. At present, no new hires are anticipated in the near future, and any new hires will be tenure track positions. As the library works to align faculty efforts with strategic plans, considerable professional development funds have been used to prepare faculty for new roles and responsibilities. Concerning faculty research, in FY2008-09, the 24 librarians produced the following scholarly outcomes: one journal editor, three members of journal editorial board, ten peer reviewed articles, nine non-peer reviewed papers and chapters, 38 book reviews, eleven presentations, and mentoring of 13 students.

**Diversity**

The values statement in the Auraria Library strategic plan underscores the organization’s commitment to inclusivity, in terms of both collection policy and personnel actions. This is appropriate and necessary to successfully advance student learning especially given the highly diverse student bodies on the Auraria campus. Some initiatives in pursuit of diversity include: Diversify Your Syllabus; identifying, cataloging, and hosting photographic images and a video on Hispanics in Colorado; producing a short documentary on Native Americans in Colorado; producing a promotional video on the Displaced Aurarian Scholarship program; and utilizing the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence to catalyze discourse to intersect international globalization and domestic multicultural awareness. As for diversity among library employees, some considerable diversity exists among library paraprofessional staff, in terms of ethno-cultural identification and also country of origin, although appreciably less such diversity exists among library faculty. Unfortunately, budget constraints and low faculty turnover reduce the opportunity to hire a more diverse faculty at this time.

**Resources**

The Auraria Library depends on the largesse of the three institutions which annually contribute to the organizational budget through a negotiation process among the three chief financial officers. The budget consists of salaries, learning materials, and general operating expenses and has remained strong despite the poor economy. Total library budgets have increased by 11% (from $7,518,870 in FY07 to $8,332,942 in FY11), and contributions for library materials have risen an impressive 24% ($2,370,581 to $2,937,200). Through consortial purchases, the library has been able to maintain and even expand access and collections especially with increased use of digital resources.

Human resource allocations have aligned with strategic priorities, guided by a commitment to training current employees. However, the need for improved technology
capacity has necessitated employment of temporary staff and short term consultants to conduct website usability tests and provide website redesign programming. The total number of library employees has decreased by 20% (from 69 to 55) from June 2005 to present. The number of faculty has remained relatively steady with a 4% drop (from 24 to 23 employees), in comparison to the 29% decrease in staff (from 45 to 32 employees). As new efficiencies permit greater productivity, the library will continue to do more with fewer staff than in earlier years. Ultimately progress depends on having the right staff with the right expertise to evolve a 21st century academic library for a diverse urban population.

A study will begin in fall 2010 to investigate various synergies between information resources and faculty teaching and research. Librarian researchers will analyze benefits that faculty members receive by using library materials in scholarly and instructional activities. This cost benefit analysis model will provide an alternative metric to traditional usage statistics, and offer university officials a compelling economic indicator to evaluate the impact of library resources during budget reviews. In the current economic climate, libraries should provide evidence of value and demonstrate their contribution to university priorities.

Challenges

- The majority of library faculty members still tend to day-to-day operational matters, thereby failing to exercise professional leadership responsibilities.
- While evidence-based strategic thinking is becoming more familiar to members of the Shared Leadership Team, long-time practices persist within workplace communities impervious to considering best practices to achieve more impactful organizational outcomes.
- Movement forward is also impaired by lack of technology savvy, i.e., legacy employees often lack conversance with emerging technologies.
- No permanent staff members have the time or expertise to maintain the increasingly important library website.
- The campus was built to accommodate no more than 15,000 students, but nearly 50,000 students now attend the three schools.

Strengths

- Relationships with tri-institutional leaders, faculty, and students have been forged through participatory action research projects and ‘new library’ program initiatives. Also, instruction librarians have begun forging relationships with faculty through Connections workshops, UC Denver First Year Experience workshops, and Diversity Your Syllabus consultations. To fortify these efforts, the disciplinary teams approach was introduced to build relationship across the entire spectrum of the library portfolio – resources, services, and spaces.
- The repurposing of first floor library space will satisfy a long identified need for study space. The 'carrying capacity' project, which will move books to the second floor or to offsite storage, promises to clear much needed spaces for 21st century learning needs, which are information intensive, technology enabled, and collaboratively generated. In combination with website improvements, this space re-invention holds promise for demonstrating that ‘great universities have great libraries.’
Need

- Library responsiveness would be aided by a tri-institutional advisory council comprised of faculty, staff, and students at the three schools. A charge should be agreed upon which ensures appropriate engagement of this representative body in guiding the library’s strategic directions, including sustaining essential two-way relationships across campus.

V. Summary of Findings by External Reviewers

Overview, Role and Mission

In two days of meetings, the team heard continual praise for the library staff and their dedication to all of the various user communities that they serve. Improvements in the scope of access to electronic journals, attention to incremental building improvements, and the service orientation of staff were highlighted by users. There is general awareness of major problems with the physical plant of the library, and a planning process is underway. While the library is valued for its provision of collections and traditional services, there is a limited amount of innovation and a lack of perception of the broader contribution the library could make to strategic priorities of the institutions it serves. The library is taking steps to establish closer liaison with academic departments and to rethink services.

Auraria Library is in a unique position among US academic libraries, serving three institutions from a community college to a research university. The library provides collections, both digital and print, to meet the needs of the instructional programs and the research programs of its three institutions. The library offers services to a broad array of faculty, staff, and students, who are incredibly diverse in many ways.

The External Review team believes that the mission of the library is appropriate to its support of the three institutions it serves. The mission is “to foster intellectual growth, academic success, and life-long learning for the students, faculty, and staff of Auraria’s diverse urban campus” and takes into account both the library’s role in the academic institutions it serves and its role in the ongoing intellectual life of its clientele.

Program Strengths

- Library staff and leadership. All three institutions value the library and think highly of library staff. The leadership of the current director, Mary Somerville, was lauded, and many commented positively on her efforts to innovate and respond to institutional priorities.
- Commitment to liaise with academic departments. The Education, Research, and Information unit of the library has recently been reorganized to emphasize strong connections to the academic departments of the three institutions. The Team believes that this is a critical direction for the library, fostering closer collaborations between librarians and faculty.
- Workshops and instruction. Librarians were praised by faculty and program leaders for their availability to provide orientation sessions and information literacy sessions for students.
- Improvements in service. The recent consolidation and renaming of service points resulted in a more efficient use of scarce staff resources and is intended to alleviate
confusion. The Team suggests that the library staff closely monitor the impact on wait times at the service points and modify staffing as needed. Self-service checkout machines should help to alleviate long waits at the service desk.

- **Access to print and digital content.** The regional Prospector service and the broader interlibrary loan services offered by the library fill a gap in needed print materials not available here. The library has worked hard with academic partners to be included in licensing arrangements of a broad array of publications at affordable prices.

- **Library physical space.** While there is broad acknowledgement of the pressing need for renovation of the library physical space, some recent improvements and aspects of the library were seen as successes, including the recent renovation of two classrooms for information literacy sessions, an increase in space available for seating, and the purchase of moveable whiteboards to encourage student collaborative work. The existing artwork and gallery space and access to natural light and overall flexibility of the open plan of the building is good. The involvement of a class of architecture students in envisioning future library space is commendable.

- **Building security.** Recent improvements have been made to building security by the addition of one staff person and the assignment of all staff to participate in building rounds.

- **Website.** The current library website was considered to be simple and easy to navigate and the library is currently developing a new website design, which should continue to serve the community well.

**Program Weaknesses**

- **Library physical space.** Members of the team were concerned that the initial impression of the library does not project a friendly feeling. Many groups noted the lack of seating, lack of electrical power, the difficulty of finding one’s way around library, and the lack of adequate group study space.

- **Budget contributions.** The team was concerned about the opaque budget contribution process that underlies the contribution of each of the three institutions to the library’s budget. Annual revisiting of the formula makes forward planning for the library a substantial challenge.

- **Services and service promotion.** Awareness of services and programs is not as high as it should be and communication with all constituencies served needs improvement. The library has been too conservative in its promotion of programs and needs to demonstrate more imagination. While librarians were widely appreciated for the quality of their services, few other than the library director, have implemented innovative programs. Staff appear not well-positioned to work with technology in the ways that today’s libraries require.

- **Narrow community perceptions of the library.** Faculty, program administrators, and students seemed to have a very conventional view of the library as a place to study and obtain books. The team found a lack of awareness of broad possibilities both by many library staff and by members of the institutions they serve. Those outside the library viewed the library in a positive way but failed to envision genuine partnerships between the library and their programs.
Recommendations for Program Improvement and Program Development

1. **Library physical space.**
   1.1. Continue with the current planning process and, in addition, make it an urgent priority to deal with the lack of seating and the lack of electrical outlets.

   1.2. Explore the appropriate balance of group and quiet space.

   1.3. Improve signage.

   1.4. Involve faculty, staff, and students in planning space that is welcoming, and conducive to academic work, including both group work and solitary work.

2. **Developing and promoting strategic programs.**
   2.1. The library has been put in too small a box by faculty and students. Library senior staff need to work with faculty and students to change their perceptions of how libraries can contribute to research excellence and student success. Library staff need to spend more time on outreach activities, including visits to departmental meetings, creation of videos, visits to classrooms, and establishing a presence in public spaces.

   2.2. The library needs to adopt a more imaginative approach to promotion of programs, particularly to the student population.

   2.3. The library needs to employ a variety of mechanisms to communicate with faculty, students, and staff regarding services and programs, especially creating and using information in the context of their academic disciplines. A priority is to devise methods for reaching out to part-time faculty who may not be included in many listservs.

   2.4. Library orientation should be a part of the orientation process for all new students in all three institutions or should be incorporated into more first year programs. Appropriate online resources should be developed for distance learning students and those who only come to campus for very limited times.

3. **Staffing.**
   3.1. Staffing has decreased and needs to be re-built with particular attention paid to hiring staff who can seek opportunities for innovation that are in line with the instructional and research goals of the three institutions.

   3.2. In particular the library needs additional staff to support the development of its digital infrastructure, including web and social media spaces.

4. **Library budget.**
   4.1. The budget model for the library should be re-evaluated. Of particular interest is achieving a better understanding of the CCD contribution to the budget of the library.
VI. General Observations and Conclusions of Program Review Panel

Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses

Overall the Program Review Panel found the Auraria Library to have many strengths. The Panel was very impressed by how much the Auraria Library is doing. The strengths that stood out were:

- Excellent resources – There were comments about improved access to electronic resources and the quick availability of items from Prospector.
- Very good customer service – This comment came through in repeated ways. It is evident that all three institutions value the Auraria Library.
- Consolidated service points
- Renovated classrooms
- Improved security in building

Weaknesses that stood out included:

- Building/Facility – Most visible and most commented on weakness.
- Lack of awareness of library services by faculty – Most faculty view the library in a traditional way and are not aware of all the library could do to assist them.
- Budget – While understanding that having one library serving three institutions is complex, there are uncertainties about the contributions from each institution.

Recommendations for Program Improvement and Future Program Development

The Auraria Library will work with the Office of Academic Resources and Services to develop an implementation plan for the following recommendations. That implementation plan will be submitted by September 15, 2011. Each spring for the next three years, the library will prepare a report for the Chancellor and Board of Regents on their progress toward meeting the recommendations.

The Program Review Panel supports the recommendations from the External Review Team. The Program Review Panel would emphasize the following recommendations that tie to the External Team’s items on the previous page:

1. Library Physical Space.

   - Add more seating throughout the library – High Priority
     - Timeline – target completion by FY 2012, although if funds were available sooner that would be ideal.
   - Add more electrical outlets throughout the library – High Priority
     - Timeline – target completion by FY 2012, although if funds were available sooner that would be ideal.
   - Continue space planning/renovation – The tri-institutional planning and the involvement of students in the process is outstanding and should continue.
     - Timeline – Ongoing

2. Developing and promoting strategic programs.

   - Determine best ways to communicate with various user groups (students, part-time faculty, etc.)
Part-time faculty would be a good group to start with
  Timeline – Every 6 months target two groups

• Outreach program – investigate developing an outreach program that would get library faculty out of the library building and have them spending more time with campus faculty.
  Timeline – Complete investigation by December 2011

• Ensure that faculty and staff plans/goals are directly related to library’s strategic plan and promote professional leadership responsibilities.
  Timeline – Complete when staff plans are reviewed and updated in 2011

4. Library budget.
• Re-examine budget model
  Timeline – Complete investigation May 2012