PIC Library Initiative for review, revision and costing

PRE-DISTRIBUTION DRAFT - SUBJECT TO CHANGE!

Recognizing that most, if not all, PIC initiatives will impact the library, it is clear that library issues must be addressed. This initiative acknowledges the need to direct attention to the library, including an upgrade and expansion of the physical facility, and the enhancement and expansion of services and resources to a wider number of users, both on-campus and off.

This Initiative proposes a renovation of and/or addition to the library building and the creation of an endowment to support both resources and services.

Please click on the hotlinks for background information on the two parts to this Initiative.

- **Renovation of/addition to library building estimated at one time cost of $5,000,000**
  Library renovation/addition would enable the creation of:
  - Attractive, quality student study areas by installing compact shelving on the ground floor, eliminating some existing shelving, and designing networked group study areas and quiet study areas for individuals.
  - A truly functional service area on the main floor by redesigning the reference and circulation areas into a single point of service, opening up the complete floor for patron use of services and computing.
  - Consolidation of the print collections so that users can find materials more easily.
  - A multimedia area for student and faculty use.
  - A climate controlled archives area and special Dickens Collection facility.
  - Electronic teaching classroom.
  - Quality staff work space.
  - Attractive interior with new, functional furnishings.

- **Endowment to produce $300,000 annually for support of resources and services**
  An endowment for resources and services would enable:
  - The purchase of increasingly expensive scholarly publications such as print and electronic periodicals, licenses and access to important electronic resources. Many of these resources are currently unaffordable but required to turn the library into a quality facility which provides the WPI community with a wide range of scholarly publications and the depth of support necessary for scholarship, graduate and undergraduate curricula, global programs and new programs.
• Installation of a kiosk in a central location on campus which would enable the WPI community to register, renew and return library materials, and receive reference assistance.

• Funding for new electronic services to facilitate use of library resources.

• Ensure library's ability to meet the needs of increasing numbers of library users at remote sites.

Renovation Rationale
Gordon Library was built in 1967 through the generous gift of George C. Gordon. The building was designed for a student population of 1700; the current student population is 3742 and the numbers of faculty and staff have also increased. The Association of College and Research Libraries Standards require seating for one quarter of the total number of students, or 931 seats for Gordon Library. We currently have only 450, many of which, being the original 1967 furnishings, are now inappropriate for individual or group project work and lack access to a network linked computer. The library should provide a high quality environment with the resources and equipment needed to support a first class education.

Although we are moving rapidly towards the era of the digital library, we still need to provide space for the physical materials we will continue to collect for many more years. The library has outgrown its walls as the original building was designed to house 200,000 volumes and we now have approximately 350,000. Two years ago compact shelving was installed in Founders Hall basement and thousands of book and periodical volumes were moved there because of insufficient shelving in the library building. In three to four years we will run out of shelving space completely and we have no areas to place additional shelving either within Gordon Library or Founders Hall.

Since its opening in 1967, the ground floor of the library has been host to a variety of tenants including the Computer Center and currently the Massachusetts Academy of Math and Science. This space is desperately needed for the expanding library collections and in order to provide better access to materials and improved services.

Endowment Rationale
The library has been unable to keep pace with increasing costs for resources, both print and electronic, and, as a consequence, some areas of the collection are inadequate to support the research and curricula needs of faculty and students. Many of the PIC initiatives will absolutely require additional resources to support the global program, increase in scholarship, new programs, etc. Periodical costs have risen over the last 10 years an average of over 10 percent each year resulting in the need to cancel 719 titles for a total savings of $360,200 since 1992 alone. The annual periodical budget is currently $450,000. The average cost of Physics subscriptions for example was $994 per year in 1993. In 1997 that cost had risen to an average of $1494, an increase of over 50%. The purchase of new titles in the support of new and expanding disciplines
is practically impossible. Books and other library materials have also greatly increased in price. Electronic resources which enable access to remotely stored full text periodicals, databases, and indexes are expensive and yet it is vital as we move into the 21st century that we provide these electronic resources and services to the WPI community.

In 1967, library services were contained within the building. Patrons had to come into the building to use the card catalog, use indexes and abstracts, ask for Reference help, request book orders and read periodicals. There was a single campus. Telecommunications, computers and the Internet have enabled the library catalog to be on the worldwide web. This makes the catalog accessible anywhere on campus, at WPI's satellite campuses, project centers abroad, and by members of the WPI Community all over the world. The library web pages within which the catalog is a "clickable resource" include access to remote electronic databases, provide opportunities to order books and Interlibrary loans over the campus network, and email reference service where librarians assist remote users on regular basis. The library must stay abreast of new technological developments if we are to provide the educational support expected. We must invest greater resources and effort into teaching students lifelong learning skills in using the great variety of electronic resources available. Expectations for remote access and service continue to increase.