

Grace A. Dow Memorial Library Board  
Draft Annual Report 2008-2009

The Library Board has appreciated the opportunity to advise our library, such a valued service within our community, on its operations and activities and to accomplish these annual goals to further improve the library.

**Goal 1: Make suggestions to library staff on processes and procedures related to technology use and instruction at the library.**

*Committee: Sarah Galt, Tami Johnson, Norm Neher*

By providing free computer use to library patrons, the Grace A. Dow library provides a valuable service that is not duplicated by other businesses in our community. This service is in high demand and evolves as technology changes. A Board subcommittee reviewed patron compliments and concerns (6/06 – 9/08) that were related to technology. The subcommittee identified the following possible issues:

- The demand for computer use exceeds the number of computers available; patrons are limited to one hour of computer use per day.
- Requests have been made to download and upload information using the library equipment (currently prevented by security issues).
- Requests have been made to have faster internet service available.
- Patrons have requested additional word processing programs.

The committee then met with Library Director, Melissa Barnard and Assistant Director, Virginia McKane. Implementation of the following was the outcome of this review.

1. Library staff created a Computer Services brochure to assist in communicating policies, procedures and services available at the library. This brochure is available at the public services desks, by the public computers, and the library's website.
2. New computer time management software was included in the 2009-10 budget to address patron concerns related to time allowed on the computers. With the city budget approval by City Council on May 18, 2009, the time management software purchase will move ahead. Implementation is projected for the fall.

**Goal 2: Participate in the review of the Library's Mission Statement and development of a strategic plan.**

*Board members participating on the Committee were: Sarah Galt, Kathleen Kinnish, Marilyn Soules*

Three Board members joined selected library staff to review the library's mission and vision, and develop a new strategic plan to achieve them. This strategic planning committee first reviewed SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) that had been solicited from the entire staff and Board. The committee also reviewed general trends and benchmarking information that the library director gathered about libraries. After review with rest of the Board and the staff, the drafted new mission statement is:

The mission of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library is to enrich our community by providing opportunities for learning, exploration, and enjoyment in a welcoming environment.

And the draft vision statement is:

The community's chosen gateway for knowledge; a place for our community to gather and connect.

In addition, the committee drafted key goals for the strategic plan and action plans for each of the goals. A sub-committee of some of the staff is reviewing and refining the action plans and will present their draft of action plans to the Board and rest of staff for input and review.

**Goal 3: Participate in the City of Midland Community Roundtable discussions regarding city services, including the services of the library, to provide input in identifying city budget priorities for the fiscal year 2009-2010**

*Participants: Maxine Brink, Sarah Galt, Tami Johnson, Kathleen Kinnish, Norm Neher, Marilyn Soules*

Six Board members participated in city roundtable discussions. They listened and responded to comments and questions about the library, and shared comments as well. The Board and staff were pleased with the high level of support for the library by the community.

**Goal 4: Suggest innovative marketing strategies to communicate library services and programs to the community.**

*Committee: Kathleen Kinnish, William Snover, Marilyn Soules*

In the fall, Director Melissa Barnard contacted Ms. Mary Beth Rousseau, Marketing Instructor at Northwood University, to engage her senior class to prepare marketing strategies for their capstone project. The class began in the spring term and met with the Director and Assistant Director Virginia McKane to receive data and statistics about current library usage and programs.

The students broke into seven small groups each having a different topic: Programming, Library as Place/Customer Service, Measurement, Information Technology/Gate Count/Website, and Cup and Chaucer Coffee Bar. Each group made a formal presentation to the class, the instructor, the library directors, and board chair Soules on May 11 and May 13. The outcome included some innovative suggestions such as speed dating and informative results introducing data manipulation by Google Analytics.

The library directors are sharing the results with the department supervisors and bring any ideas to be explored or implemented at a later date to the Board.

The Board will continue supporting the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library staff, providing community input and encouraging patron participation in improving the library's services. The Board is impressed with the staff's accomplishments and continued service excellence, and it looks forward to acting upon new goals in 2009-2010.

2008-2009 Grace A. Dow Memorial Library Board

Marilyn Soules, Chair

Kathleen Kinnish, Vice-Chair

Maxine Brink

Sarah Galt

Tami Johnson

Norm Neher

William Snover