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HELIN Strategic Framework Document

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HELIN's Strategic Direction

New Commons as Scribe: 8-6-09 V2

I. Context

HELIN has begun to envision its future and eventually will produce a strategic plan. This document is not the strategic plan. Rather, it is the strategic framework under which the plan will eventually be crafted. The framework includes for now (as other elements may be added later):

1. Mission and guiding principles
2. Analysis of external conditions
3. Vision/Goals for HELIN
4. Priority initiatives to pursue organized by goals and 4 time-based buckets

This framework document is a summary of three work sessions conducted by New Commons with the HELIN Board and Executive Director from the spring to early summer of 2009:

- A one-half day workshop to complete the conditions analysis
- Online conversations on mission and HELIN accomplishments
- A one-day retreat to finalize mission, guiding principles, goals, first cut at some strategic initiatives, evolving the culture of HELIN, and a sketch of developing policy governance for HELIN

The summary is in the words of participants. The framework will be further developed in subsequent phases of planning workshops.

To understand the approach to planning HELIN used, please read the paper, "Dynamic Strategic Planning Practices" by New Commons.

II. Mission and Guiding Principles

Mission is HELIN's reason for being, defining what business it is in; there is a timeless quality about a mission as if it is always there to pursue but never achieved.

Guiding principles are the fundamental truths that serve as the boundaries in which the culture evolves over time. Further, in the pursuit of the mission, the principles guide decisions on what choices to make: do this/don't do this. The mission in this framework is nearly word for word as the original one. The guiding principles are new statements, albeit some of them may have been implicit in the work of HELIN, but never stated. The guiding principles are not yet operable; they are currently aspirations, and it will take 5 to 10 years of practice until they become palpable.

Mission: Further the educational goals, and strengthen member institutions through collaborative development of library systems, collections and services.

Guiding Principles:

Caveat: individual members of HELIN deliver the library goods and not HELIN the entity. HELIN's job is to continually increase the capabilities of member libraries to deliver to the goods to their end users.

Needs and Services

- User's needs drive the services provided: faculty and students will be effective teachers, learners, researchers, and producers of knowledge
- Use collaboration to identify needs and create the services delivered...at the same time members are free to be independent. Members serve two masters: the collective and the institution
- In delivering services, be responsive to market forces; create efficiencies by reducing redundancies...aim to create services more "just in time" in response to members needs instead of "just in case" if a need surfaces in the future
- In purchasing hardware and software, balance the need for stability, innovation and cost effectiveness

Culture and communication

- A culture of continuous training and professional development will evolve into and operate as a community of practice
- Accountability: do what we claim we will do and measure progress
- Transparency and integrity with information and processes, e.g., decision making, will be evident

Decision making

- Strategic decisions are made by consensus. Consensus is the act of getting agreement when there are no major objections or one or more person(s) stands back and says: "I don't agree with the decision, but will not stand in the way of making it." Balance the need for timeliness of decision making with the need for an inclusive process.
- Policy governance is used: the board is strategic by setting the mission, goals and strategic initiatives and the executive director implements/runs operations and does so within any constraints or limits set by the board

III. Scan of External Conditions

This section is a scan of the external environment to identify the conditions that are creating an impact on the work of HELIN and consortium members. The text states the condition and its impact on HELIN. Conditions can be technological, social/relational, the nature of knowledge, economic or other. A condition could be either a threat or an opportunity; a strength or weakness.

Two kinds of conditions are analyzed:

- Immediate conditions – those here and now present
- Emergent conditions – those on the horizon heading this way

Once all of the conditions were identified, the board grouped and prioritized them in two ways:

- Mega conditions - those which HELIN could not influence much, but must be paying attention to as the impact of the condition does have consequences
- "Leverageable" conditions – those that could be influenced, leveraged or mobilized to HELIN's advantage

The conditions are presented in sequence from most to least important as of the summer of 2009. Conditions change and thus the prioritization can change.

Immediate Conditions

Mega Conditions

The downturn of the economy creates tradeoffs

There are cutbacks, budget constraints, vendor issues and anxiety. Before the downturn we were hoping and planning for both virtual and actual robust capabilities. Now, we are going to be forced to choose between virtual and actual or experience a starker/less robust balance between them. One silver lining: since we are all in the “downturn” boat together, we can work on achieving economies of scale.

Relatively high stable enrollments for the public schools

Net-Gen technology: patterns of use including social networking, distributed virtual entry points and peer publishing

Leveragable Conditions

HELIN organizational structure is not strategic

The HELIN organizational structure is not strategic because there is no deployment of staff or board resources to specific objectives. Further, the structure is based on personalities and not strategic needs. Roles and responsibilities are not clear. Going forward, there is a need to define and disseminate the roles and accountabilities of the committees and the board.

Our identity as librarians is changing

This is our self perception as librarians sitting on the HELIN board. Further, college administrators don’t understand our role anymore. There is professional anxiety among those in library information science: do we still matter? In the face of the internet is the library relevant? Is the catalogue still relevant? What is the library’s relevance to parent institutional priorities? There has been outsourcing of services. For a library to be effective, face-to-face interaction is primary.

HELIN has no direction

In HELIN, people are in motion doing things but the efforts are not directed to specific strategic actions

New technology options

Success of the library is linked to reliance on information technology; open source tools are available

Zen mind – no mind don't know

Emergent Conditions

Mega conditions

The role of “utilities” in HELIN's future

LYRASIS and OCLC; do we really need a HELIN catalogue as there are other tools out there?

Google

Threat or opportunity

Falling enrollments

There are falling enrollments for some colleges (mostly private), but not all. Better said, enrollments will be uncertain with the word “enrollments” as code for revenue.

Leveragable Conditions

Technology is changing the means of storing knowledge and scholarly communication

There is a potential loss of the record of preserving human knowledge. If formats of knowledge change, do the processes change? What is worthy of preserving? How do we preserve in the age of technology? Libraries use to be preservers and gatekeepers. Society has changed this role, e.g., the library structure (as we know it) will change on campus. Users are passing us by. All of this change tells us to change our role and redefine how librarians work with information and knowledge. We have information abundance and the user demands convenience; the user doesn't want the information sifted or analyzed. If we wrestle with this question, HELIN will make better strategic choices and better define HELIN's leadership in the next iteration of this work.

Take a role in state leadership

Ramp up the role of HELIN to influence the direction of the state beyond academics

Move to virtual

There is an increase in online communication

The library role is changing to more of a virtual experience

The library's current relationship to patrons is a weakness

Greater, more robust portals/devices/tools**Open source**

Threat or opportunity

Membership growth

Threat or positive

Redundancy

Many of the same library catalogues exist all over the country; libraries exist with the same collections. Redundancy can be the presence of inefficiencies or the presence of strategic back-ups.

IV. Vision/Strategic Goals

HELIN has crafted six goals, which together comprise its vision for the future.

Goal one: Make the user's needs (e.g., convenience) central to what is provided to members who in turn deliver services to the user

Goal two: Be the library of the future in both storing and accessing knowledge; blend the best of library traditions with the use of new technology tools

Goal three: Create efficiencies and reduce redundancies in collection services with a focus on centralized cataloguing and cooperative collection development

Goal four: Resourcefully deliver professional development to library staff so they meet the changing demands of the information age

Goal five: Create the HELIN policy governance model

Goal six: Make the organizational structure strategic by organizing committees and staffing to deliver results to achieve priorities

V. Priority Initiatives to Pursue the Goals

The board determined these priorities based on applying a set of criteria to be found in the paper “Dynamic Strategic Planning Practices.” The only priorities HELIN will pursue at this time are those with owners who are board members, which are located in the pursue-for-sure box. The owners are currently temporary for 90 days – until October 31, 2009. The priorities are in bold with the owner listed.

Currently, there are six goals and 24 initiatives distributed under the goals. From the 24 initiatives, four have owners and the process of developing implementation plans for them will commence early this fall.

Goal one: Make the user's needs (e.g., convenience) central to what is provided to members who in turn deliver services to the user

	Year one	Year one to two	2 to 5 years	5 plus years
Pursue for sure		Provide single search access to the collections (Kathy as owner)		
Under consideration	Provide mobile access to HELIN's collections and services	Create the HELIN electronic reference collection	Central media server	
In the holding tank		Provide online interactive training tutorials Central copyright clearance		

Goal two: Be the library of the future in both storing and accessing knowledge; blend the best of library traditions with the use of new technology tools

	Year one	Year one to two	2 to 5 years	5 plus years
Pursue for sure		Review the current model for ILS, e.g., what is the primary finding tool for the future (Mary as owner)		
Under consideration	Identify futurist expertise to expose members to	Determine what content to digitize the soonest		Centralized processing of materials
In the holding tank		Pilot initiative: an item loaned resides at the requesting library	Expand patron spaces by reducing space occupied by physical material	

Goal three: Create efficiencies and reduce redundancies in collection services with a focus on centralized cataloguing and cooperative collection development

	Year one	Year one to two	2 to 5 years	5 plus years
Pursue for sure	Pursue cooperative collection development (HELIN approved plan) with Yankee Book Publishers (Russ as owner)			
Under consideration	Establish a program for creating functional experts in HELIN	Pursue purchasing of scanning/digitizing tools for HELIN		
In the holding tank	Investigate and report virtual reference plans for HELIN Pilot shelf-ready book purchasing	Investigate and report off-site storage plans for HELIN Create last copy program appropriate to HELIN needs		

Goal four: Resourcefully deliver professional development to library staff so they meet the changing demands of the information age

	Year one	Year one to two	2 to 5 years	5 plus years
Pursue for sure	Organize professional development: annual meeting focus; assess committee generated initiatives for professional learning elements; list of internal consultants (Ruth as owner)			
Under consideration		Use strategic initiatives to proactively identify professional development opportunities		
In the holding tank		Promote additional committee-generated professional learning initiatives Create effective training model for III modules (central office)		

Goal five: Create the model for HELIN policy governance

	Year one	Year one to two	2 to 5 years	5 plus years
Pursue for sure				
Under consideration	Analyze policy governance models as applied to consortiums			
In the holding tank				

Goal six: Make the organizational structure strategic by organizing committees and staffing to deliver results to achieve priorities

	Year one	Year one to two	2 to 5 years	5 plus years
Pursue for sure	Create the strategic operating structure based on the strategic agenda (Rosie as owner)			
Under consideration	Assess central office staff responsibilities Investigate options for providing HR management (other than through RWU)			
In the holding tank	Establish best practices for board communication to all constituencies			