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# Joint Use Libraries as Successful Strategic Alliances

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## ABSTRACT

A joint use library provides an example of a strategic alliance between two or more stakeholders. The planning and implementation of such a venture can be a complex undertaking. This article draws on the example of the proposed joint use library and history center in Worcester in the UK, which promises to be the largest such undertaking in the UK. Some of the potential challenges that other joint use university and public libraries have faced are explored. The article argues that lessons can be learned from other sectors where the factors contributing to successful strategic alliances are well researched and documented.

## INTRODUCTION

Even on a small scale, developing plans and implementing a joint use library can be an extremely complex undertaking. The challenge is even greater when the project is on a large scale with multiple partner and stakeholder demands to reconcile and where there is a dearth of existing models to draw upon. This article explores some of the key considerations of merging services in a joint use library and draws on the experience of the proposed unique development in Worcester in the UK. Reference is also made to the lessons learned from other public and university library joint use initiatives, particularly the Martin Luther King Jr. library in San Jose, California, which may be considered to have some similarities with the proposed development in Worcester in terms of scale and scope, including the fact that both involve entirely purpose-built premises.

## THE VISION FOR A JOINT USE LIBRARY AND HISTORY CENTER IN WORCESTER

The proposed Worcester joint use library and history center is a complex and ambitious project involving not only the academic library of the University of Worcester, the public library service for the county of Worcestershire, and the County Archives and Archaeology Service, but also the regional Chamber of Commerce. Adjacent to the proposed new university campus, on a currently derelict site in the city center, the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council, working in partnership with the city, are planning to create an innovative integrated joint use library. This will be a library for the whole community, providing a bridge between the city center and the campus and a gateway to higher education for the people of the region. This fusion is likely to be the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and will "re-imagine" the role of the library in the twenty-first century as the core information provider to the community. It will embrace a wide range of integrated information and learning services, including advice and support to business, an integrated customer center dealing with public services, and an exciting archive and history center giving access to the region's rich heritage and culture through archives and archaeology. A major focus, exploiting the shared acknowledged area of excellence in both the university and county, will be a children's and young person's library.

### WHY JOIN UP?

Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskinsson have identified a number of reasons why organizations may wish to merge. These include "increased market power," "overcome entry barriers," "cost of new product development," "increased diversification," and to "avoid competition" (1996, p. 222).

These are reflected in research by McNicol (2003) outlining some of the reasons why two or more libraries may wish to merge:

- Increased use of resources
- Greater numbers and a wider range of users
- Joint funding (for resources, staff, and buildings)
- Pressure on public libraries to work with a variety of other organizations, in particular to support learners
- Attract new user groups
- Make better use of staff skills

Despite the potential benefits, there are a number of potential barriers to achieving success in any organizational merger. Hitt et al. provide some examples of the possible pitfalls that partners face, including "integration difficulties," "inadequate evaluation," "large debts," "inability to achieve synergy," "too much diversification," and the facility being "too large" (1996, p. 222).

Examples of school-public library involvement in joint use developments are more prevalent and well-documented than those involving larger academic institutions such as colleges or universities. However, joint school-public library ventures tend to be on a smaller scale and, at least in the past, on a more informal basis. For example, not all smaller joint use libraries have formal service-level and partnership agreements in place, as the modes of operating have evolved over a number of years. This can mean it is left to factors such as personal relationships and informal contact to provide the “glue” to sustain the partnership or contribute to its success. In the case of larger initiatives, such as those between public and academic libraries, more formal approaches are needed to ensure the success of the venture.

Drawing on experiences from the corporate sector, where the development of organizational alliances is well researched, Faulkner outlines four key factors that facilitate the success of alliances:

- Positive attitudes between partners
- Clear organizational arrangements for the alliance
- A philosophy of organizational learning
- Congruent long-term goals (Faulkner, 1994, p. 112)

Such lessons taken from the corporate sector might apply equally well to ambitious larger-scale undertakings such as public and academic library partnerships. This article will look at these factors in relation to the planned joint use library and history center in Worcester, drawing on further examples from elsewhere.

### POSITIVE PARTNER ATTITUDES

Faulkner (1994) highlighted the importance of a sensitive attitude toward national, as well as corporate, cultural differences. There are clearly many differences between the public library sector and the academic library sector, for example, the differences in remit and responsibilities. In England the government department responsible for public libraries is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), while academic libraries are accountable to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Despite the potential for conflict arising from being accountable to different bodies, both types of libraries are being increasingly encouraged to cooperate at a national level. For example, as a result of the recommendations of the *Empowering the Learning Community* report (Library and Information Commission, 2000), the UK government set up the Empowering the Learning Community Steering Group. This is a joint initiative led by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the DCMS that had as one of its principal aims to take forward the recommendations that “public and educational libraries in communities or defined geographic areas should establish co-operative arrangements to improve services to their users” (Library and Information Commission, 2000, para.

1). It could be suggested that the response from libraries to other current policy initiatives might also involve public and academic libraries working together. The *Framework for the Future* initiative in the UK (DCMS, 2003) gives public libraries a clear role to play in supporting the government's social inclusion agenda through exploring opportunities to engage potential users with their services, in particular, the "hard to reach"; at the same time, universities are coming under pressure to widen access to this same group (DFES, 2003). Since 2000 *Empowering the Learning Community* has put lifelong learning high on the national government agenda and ensured public libraries have a central role to play. One example of research commissioned in response to *Empowering the Learning Community* (McNicol et al., 2002) highlighted a number of examples of public library authorities taking action to engage further with other educational organizations, including university libraries.

Beyond the need to respond to the political agenda, in all sectors the financial imperative can be a key driver to collaborate, and this applies equally to the academic and public sectors. Palmer, writing about a joint use library initiative in Harnosand in Sweden, refers to the way that this initiative had the potential to provide added efficiency through the "joint resources of larger premises, staff, expertise, data communication, books, periodicals and other media" (Palmer, 1999). Similarly, Kaupilla and Russell (2003) illustrate how the associated economies of scale were an important benefit in the Martin Luther King Jr. Library in California, where savings were made in areas such as maintenance and security.

Faulkner (1994) also points out the importance of a strong commitment by top- and lower-level management in the partner organizations. In the joint use library development in Worcester, all the stakeholders are committed to the venture, as demonstrated through policy documents. The planned integrated library is attractive to each of the stakeholders for a number of reasons, which are described below.

The University of Worcester's vision, as highlighted in its Strategic Plan 2004–2008, is to become a high-quality university with an international reputation for excellent, inclusive education. It has a mission to be the university of choice, particularly for the people of Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and surrounding areas, a generally underfunded region with a significant mixture of urban and rural deprivation (University of Worcester, 2005). The University of Worcester is the only higher education institution in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. It has been expanding steadily for some years and is engaged in an ambitious, wide-ranging program designed to stimulate wider participation in high-quality higher education.

As part of this growth, the University of Worcester is planning to create a second campus on the site of the old Worcester Royal Infirmary, a currently derelict site, in the city center. The vision is of a high-quality, inclusive campus with landmark architecture that will be a source of pride to students,

staff, and the local community and that will make a significant contribution to the regeneration of the surrounding area. The creation of a city center campus is expected to enhance and rejuvenate the creative, cultural, and artistic life of Worcester as well as contribute to economic regeneration. The whole development will be part of the wider St. Clement's Gate: the Worcester Learning Quarter development, contributing to skills significant to development in the region.

From the point of view of the County Council, the funder of the public library service, the current library serving the center of Worcester is poorly located, is housed in an old building with inadequate access, and is too small for the needs of the community. The need for a new library has been identified in County Council plans since the late 1990s. This development provides not only a unique opportunity to integrate collections and services with the university but also to bring together all the Worcestershire historic records and archives within a new library and history center. The City Council sees the library development as being at the heart of its planning vision for regenerating that part of the city into the Worcester Learning and Cultural Quarter. It will contribute to Worcester City's vision of "making Worcester a great place to live, work and visit" (University of Worcester, 2005, p. 10). Its four key themes are a Prosperous City; a Green and Healthy City; a Safe City, and an Inclusive City.

The Hereford and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce is seeking to develop its business intelligence library alongside the business information resources of the University of Worcester, which supports the business school, and use it as a springboard for developing a range of additional information services to support established local businesses and new start-ups. The adjacency to the university campus will facilitate a focus for business through knowledge transfer activity and research.

Other stakeholders in the wider community such as schools, the sixth form college, and further education partners see the library development as offering a rich resource for their students.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

At both a strategic and operational level the success of a joint use library is enhanced by clear agreement on organizational arrangements and the development and use of formal partnership and service-level agreements. The following section discusses some of the topics for consideration in clarifying organizational arrangements during the planning stage.

### *Management*

The management of a joint use library will invariably involve some degree of compromise between the partners involved in terms of how it is managed and structured. A number of different approaches to the management of joint use libraries have been identified. Rabe (2002) refers to

the example of the Almedal joint use library in Sweden, which has a single person heading the service in charge, while Palmer (1999) refers to the model used at Harnosand in Sweden, where there is shared management responsibility resulting in three library heads representing public, county, and university libraries. In the Martin Luther King Jr. Library the model has been to share the directorship of the library between two heads: the Public Library Director and the Dean of Libraries at San Jose State University (Kaupilla & Russell, 2003). In Worcester it is intended that there will not be parallel management teams but rather a more centralized approach to management.

The relationship between Worcestershire County Council and the University of Worcester has been fostered for a number of years through a quarterly liaison meeting between all the areas represented by the council's Department of Cultural Services and the related University of Worcester departments. So the language and reality of cooperation is well established, and several smaller projects have already been successfully managed, including the mounting of a permanent exhibition of wood sculpture in the University of Worcester library with the County Museums Service; the location of the County Historic Environment and Archaeology Service at the University of Worcester and the subsequent development of a new pathways in undergraduate and postgraduate programs; and a shared analysis of reference material to avoid local duplication.

The commitment of the chief executives has been essential from the start. The Chief Executive of the County Council, the Vice Chancellor of the University, and the Chief Executive of the City Council have wholeheartedly believed in the vision and have worked to ensure that the political will of the region has been behind this project. Senior officers on all sides from such diverse departments as planning, architecture, and finance have collaborated first on the outline business case and then on the successful bid under the Public Finance Initiative (PFI) bid, a UK government initiative to encourage the development of private finance in the public sector (HM Treasury, 2005). In September 2005 the DCMS and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) announced the award of £36.8 million credits for the Worcester joint use library. It was the largest single allocation made in this annual round and signified national recognition of the strength and impact of the proposal.

When discussing the arrangements for a joint use library, agreement is needed on how the budget for the venture will work. Schwanz suggests there are three broad types of costs to consider: ongoing, start-up, and space costs, which refers to future growth (Schwanz, 2000, p. 479). Agreement on the allocation of all forms of costs is important to the success of a joint venture. In the case of the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, there is an elaborate cost-sharing agreement for much of the library, but budget allocations, accounting systems, and funding schemes are operated separately,

with the university concentrating on building collections for students and the public library on building collections for the community. There have been tremendous savings in maintenance and shared information technology (IT), although there have been few savings in other areas.

An added complexity some joint use libraries experience is in the diverse range of funding sources upon which the different partners can draw. For example, in the UK some joint use libraries are partly funded by private companies (Evidence Base, 2005). The Worcester project is putting together a funding mix based on PFI credits and HEFCE Strategic Development Support.

### *Models of Integration*

Agreeing on the model for integration is important for a successful partnership. Rabe reports on a continuum of integration that can exist in joint use libraries: "What comes closest to integration is total merger, and the idea that is furthest away from it is just sharing the same premises. Somewhere in between comes the concept of coordinating—you are in the same building but you respect each other's work" (Rabe, 2002, para. 9). At Worcester the partners hope that there will be potential for further collaboration with other parts of their existing services (both campuses and branch libraries and services such as the County Museum) while essentially retaining their distinctive organizational identities.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Library has opted for a highly integrated structure where possible. For example, any library user is able to use everything on the same terms and functions. The service is based on the principle that "services would be integrated unless doing so would not make sense from a user or functional point of view" (Conaway, 2000, p. 42). For example, the circulation system and IT are fully merged, but the children's library is not, as it is seen as a purely public library function. Noncirculating collections (for example, periodicals, reference collections, and government publications) are totally merged, but circulating collections are still shelved separately, largely because the two libraries have different classification systems (the public library uses Dewey Decimal; the university uses the Library of Congress). The general collection is largely public library stock, and the research collection is largely university library stock. "Seamless" service is the goal, however (Conaway, 2000, p. 42).

In Worcester, too, the proposed model of integration is one that is completely seamless to the user. All collections will be integrated and displayed in a way that is accessible and useful to all; staff will be working within their specializations, such as children's services, curriculum materials, subject specialist enquiries, and information skills teaching from across both public and academic library backgrounds according to their capability and interest. The ambition is that, to the library user, the background employer is irrelevant and indistinguishable. The building will be organized into

“zones” according to the kind of activity going on there—for example, noisy, discursive, or quiet study—with the appropriate adjacencies and linkages. People will identify the area that serves their purpose on that particular visit, or use more than one aspect of the service within that visit. Thus, there is no concept of an “academic” or “public” area within the same building.

The Worcester development reflects a growing recognition that learners do not see themselves as users of one particular library. Research carried out at the University of Central England in 1997–98 on the People Flows Project found that almost one-third of public library users are either full-time students or lifelong learners, and over two-thirds of the users of university and college libraries and over half the users of public libraries also use other libraries (Nankivell, Foster, & Elkin, 2000). In other words, library users use libraries for many different reasons at different times of their lives; they probably have little understanding of the differences between libraries. A library of the kind envisaged in Worcester would help to break down some of the barriers and preconceptions experienced by potential library users.

### *Staffing*

Staffing is one of the most important aspect of forming a joint use library partnership, yet it can be the biggest challenge. There are many different examples of staffing models in joint university and public libraries. For example, the Lichfield joint use library, which is a partnership between Staffordshire University, Staffordshire Libraries and Information Services, and Tamworth and Lichfield College in the UK, is predominately staffed by public library staff, with university staff only working in the library at specific key points such as induction periods for new students (McNicol, 2004).

The Martin Luther King Jr. Library encountered a limit to integration at the level of staff. Much of the professional staffing remains separate, with two employers and four unions, partly because of the significantly different staffing structures. It was felt that it was not appropriate to ask city staff to give up respected city status or university staff to give up university academic status as each have a range of different expectations and structures. For example, university librarians have faculty status as professors, have tenure, and are under pressure to publish, with promotion based on published output criteria. In contrast, public librarians have career progression through professional development, including line management responsibility. In addition, different pay scales exist between the university and public library staff.

Other joint use libraries have reported difficulties in merging staff. For example, at the Almedal library working conditions are different for university and public library staff: “university staff usually have better conditions of employment than local authority employees . . . they are difficult to harmonize” (Rabe, 2002, para. 11).



Clearly there can be differences in culture and practices between staff from different backgrounds, which can affect integration. The Martin Luther King Jr. Library found that staff priorities were different; for example, public library staff expected to spend half of their time at the service desk, whereas for university library staff it was an activity that they hoped to spend less time on.

In some cases, however, the differences between staff culture, expectations, and practice may be more perceptual than real. Research by Dalton, Mynott, Nankivell, and Reardon (2001) has found that between staff and employers working in different types of library services, perceptual, rather than practical, barriers and differences in skills are the key barrier to staff mobility between library types. In the Martin Luther King Jr. Library this was borne out to some extent in relation to the difficulties experienced in staffing arrangements for the reference service, where, "although differences between the two libraries certainly do exist, the perception that academic librarians and public librarians answer very different types of reference questions was proving to be more myth than reality" (Conaway, 2000, p. 44).

Work to develop a common understanding of the work of each service, for example, through shadowing, can be vital to developing a shared vision and to overcoming such perceptual barriers. Training can also assist in developing understanding between staff from different backgrounds. In the Lichfield library, efforts are taken to ensure that staff coming from different services are provided with the opportunity to learn about each others' customers and practices. As a result, it was found that public library staff "have little difficulty responding to students queries" (McNicol, 2004). Sharing staff training in team building, collaboration, and management was provided in the set-up phase of the Martin Luther King Jr. Library to try to overcome cultural differences between staff (Kaupilla & Russell, 2003, p. 257).

Clearly staffing in a joint use library remains a sensitive issue. A recent conference on dual use libraries in the UK organized by Evidence Base strongly suggested that the further development of joint use libraries in a variety of different contexts may call for a radical reconsideration of the role and responsibility of staff in such an environment (Evidence Base, 2005). Such efforts may help to overcome some of the potential problems and develop a new form of hybrid librarian for joint use library environments.

In Worcester the potential difficulties of integrating staff are acknowledged, but it is hoped that the same issues of pay comparability that other libraries have encountered will be minimal, and a careful process of job evaluation is planned to help to ensure equity. Similarly, at a senior level, staff have already begun to work well together on developing the vision that has already dispelled any stereotypical misconceptions.

Such aspects of staffing may be difficult to reconcile, and it may be the case that the best approach is to acknowledge this and plan to manage these

differences as effectively as possible. In some cases the differences may bring positive results. In Worcester it is expected that the differences between staff coming from different services will be in expertise and role emphasis, which will mean that the community will get a richness and depth of service and experience; for example, the skills in reader development developed by many public librarians may benefit student users of the library service.

#### *Resources and Services*

Clear agreement about the allocation of, and access to, resources and services is important to a successful partnership. Some examples of areas where clear decisions are needed at the outset are outlined below.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Library highlighted some initial difficulties in agreeing how the reference service might work, specifically whether the service should be "a side-by-side, or 'duplex' model, or fully integrated operation" (Conaway, 2000, p. 42). Some of the university librarians wanted separate reference services for students and the public, whereas most public librarians felt that their professional skills were being undervalued by university staff wanting two reference desks.

Aligning the library classification systems and providing catalog access to collections may prove challenging. For example, the Alvin Sherman Library and Research and Information Center in Florida is a joint public and university library that arranges its scholarly books using the Library of Congress classification system, while more popular materials are classified using Dewey Decimal classification; the catalogs are joint catalogs (Nova Southeastern University, 2004). The Martin Luther King Jr. Library has also made the decision to have one catalog for its collection. In contrast, the Lichfield joint use library does not have integrated catalogs, and this is something that students have found problematic (McNicol, 2004). Similarly, a joint use library in Hervey Bay in Southern Queensland, Australia, which consists of the Hervey Bay City Council and the University of Southern Queensland, has reported difficulties with their separate catalogs (Humphreys & Cooper, 1998).

Agreement on opening hours may be challenging for joint use libraries. In some cases where libraries have aligned their opening hours with the public library service, such as Lichfield and Hervey Bay, it has meant that the library is available to students for shorter periods than if the university opening hours were adhered to (McNicol, 2004; Humphreys & Cooper, 1998). In the Worcester joint use library it is hoped that the range of activity, cultural experiences, and children's services, plus the addition of high-quality catering and exhibitions (with some appropriate small-scale retail) will make the library a destination attracting longer visits from the community, with all users benefiting from extended opening hours.

Other issues around access to materials and resources can be challenging. This can include differences in the public and university licences

for access to electronic journals and different loan periods. In addition, students may feel that there will be difficulties in guaranteeing sufficient resources are available for them to support their paid courses if the public is using the library too (McNicol, 2004; McNicol et al., 2002). Worcester recognizes that these sensitivities have to be addressed during service concept development.

### A LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

Faulkner (1994) says that the most successful long-term alliances are those in which the partners learn to learn from each other so that their mutual agenda shifts and develops as the alliance matures. Although it is the very early stages of the Worcester development, the partners have already started to adopt a learning philosophy and have taken time to learn from the experiences of the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, which has significant parallels with what is being planned in Worcester: a relatively small site, on the edge of the university campus, combining two significant, but not overly generously funded, libraries.

One way in which a successful alliance can continue to learn and grow is through the use of effective evaluation from the planning stages through the ongoing provision of the service. Evidence from the literature suggests that, across a broad range of joint use libraries, evaluation is often an aspect that is neglected or poorly approached. One of the only attempts to devise a system for evaluation of joint use libraries is that developed by Amey (1987). Considering evaluation and performance measures for a joint use library before it is built may seem extreme. However, this can clearly be of great value for organizational learning. Considering evaluation issues in terms of the operating library can act as a reality check and help to test assumptions about how the library will work in reality. Such activities can help to highlight areas that need more attention and that may need to be added into an initial memo of understanding and partnership agreements between all organizations involved.

Evaluation is useful for each of the partners to find out more about each other. In the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, for example, evaluation was important and commenced at an early stage. Staff consultation had highlighted potential tensions in staffing the reference service. Thus, significant evaluation efforts were put in place to further explore the issues and discover potential solutions. As a result, some activities were devoted to planning this aspect of the library, including "several retreats . . . focus groups for faculty, students, and the public" (Conaway, 2000, p. 43). A professor of information studies was also engaged to assist in the design and analysis of a shadowing project and two surveys.

Evaluation can also help the joint use library to find out more about its changing user base. Examples exist of user consultation and evaluation being undertaken prior to developing a joint use library. Hervey Bay made

great efforts to communicate with its users in a wide range of ways, including newsletters, newspaper columns, pamphlets, personal contacts, and setting up a user group (Humphreys & Cooper, 1998). In the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, community forums were used to inform development (Kaupilla & Russell, 2003, p. 262). Evaluation is not without its challenges; for example, the Martin Luther King Jr. Library found that early user opposition existed, with potential university users believing that “the public were going to take over the collections” and the local community concerned that funding would be diverted from branch libraries. However, raising such issues at an early stage allowed the library planning team to address these groups’ concerns prior to opening the library (Conaway, 2000, p. 42).

Developing ongoing performance measures for joint university-public libraries is not without its challenges. Separate performance targets exist relating to public libraries and university libraries. For example, in the UK university libraries can develop performance measures based on the SCONUL (Society of College, University, and National Libraries) guidelines or feed into HEFCE institutional targets. For public libraries, the government, through the Audit Commission, provides targets for performance: the public library service measures and public library impact measures. However, in the UK joint use libraries effectively fall outside of any remit to adhere to a single set of measures or standards applicable to the whole service. Without such national frameworks, developing shared targets and ongoing learning through performance can be difficult. Senior staff at Worcester plan to address this issue through joint consultation and discussion with their respective monitoring bodies during the planning process.

### CONGRUENT LONG-TERM GOALS

Faulkner (1994) points out the value of partners having congruent long-term goals. In the Worcester joint use library initiative all partners see the value of the collaborative arrangement over the long term. For example, for the University of Worcester the joint use library will figure as a key aspect of the Strategic Plan, which is currently being revised. The university masterplan for the new campus drafted in April 2005 states: “It became clear that the potential existed to develop a unique university/public partnership approach to the library and locate it on a site adjacent to the Castle Street site itself, but nearer to the city centre. The possibility of using the library as a physical as well as an intellectual and virtual ‘bridge’ to and from the broader community thus became available” (University of Worcester, 2005, p. 10).

### CONCLUSION

The Worcester joint use library and history center is likely to be completely new for the United Kingdom and highly innovative internationally. It will provide a paradigm for future development in other cities, and it

represents a model of cross-sector cooperation that is integral to the modernization agenda in a creatively collaborative way. It represents an efficient use of scarce public funds for infrastructure development.

Such a development will create a cultural, learning, and information center of excellence, engendering social inclusion and raising aspirations in the broadest sense for the whole community, regardless of age, background, and ability, and in a way that contributes uniquely to the regeneration of the city of Worcester and beyond. It will invigorate the city and stimulate the desire to learn, both formally and informally. It is expected that it will demonstrate beyond doubt that public and academic libraries share a single vision and serve a single community. However, the only way to realize this is to work successfully in partnership.

In order to realize this vision the need to take steps and plan for a successful strategic alliance cannot be underestimated. Faulkner (1994) has identified some key factors that contribute to the success of alliances. In ambitious, innovative alliances such as the Worcester joint use library, where the alliance is on a large scale involving multiple partners and stakeholders, ensuring that the groundwork for a successful alliance is in place is vital, although the many emerging joint use ventures on a smaller scale could also benefit from taking note of these lessons.

The Worcester joint use library and history center planning team has acknowledged the importance of these factors in establishing a long-term alliance. The team has also learned from other large-scale joint use library developments such as the staff of the Martin Luther King Jr. Library, who have worked so hard to put into practice the reality that "A college education is just a step away from the public library" (Kirchoff, 2005, p. 10).

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