

2014

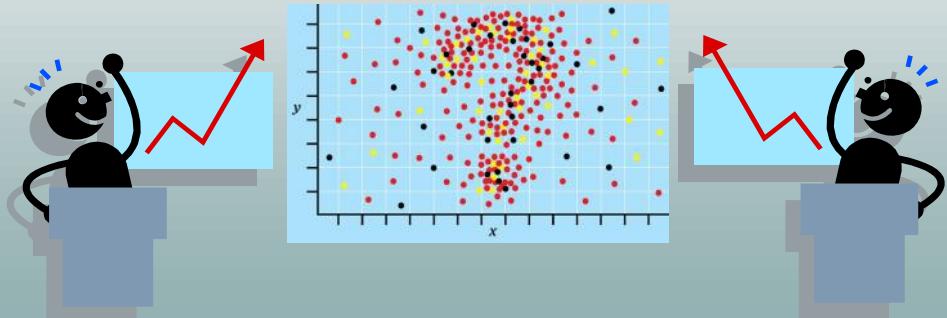
STATE OF THE UW LIBRARIES

Based on FY12 Academic
Libraries Survey data

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ABOUT THE DATA

The data in this report come from the FY12 Academic Libraries Survey, which is administered by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). Data are collected from all academic libraries in the United States every 2 years and are made available through the NCES Library Statistics Program website.

For this analysis, UW library directors were asked to submit the same lists of peer institutions that are used on their campuses for general assessment and accreditation reporting. When necessary, the lists were pared down to include only true peers (those similar in size to the UW schools). This report compares the UW libraries' data to that of their peers.

The purpose of this project is to gauge UW libraries' performance in relationship to their peers, to identify library strengths and weaknesses, and to discover areas where UW libraries are falling below peer benchmarks. There are many areas in which UW libraries fall below their peer averages, but this doesn't mean that UW should try to meet those averages—to stay competitive, UW libraries should aim to be *better* than average.

Data compiled, analyzed, and illustrated by Anna Wigtil, a 2014 graduate of UW-Madison's School of Library and Information Studies (anna.wigtil@gmail.com).

Further information about the Academic Libraries Survey can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/compare/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UW libraries serve over 200,000 students, faculty, and staff on 26 campuses, but they fall behind their peers in almost every area covered by the NCES Academic Libraries Survey.

Taken as a whole, the UW Libraries...

- Have smaller budgets than their peers
- Spend less on library materials than their peers
- Own fewer materials than their peers
- Have fewer staff than their peers

In spite of this, the Libraries...

- Are open longer hours than their peers
- Have more patrons come into the library on a regular basis
- Circulate more items than their peers do

Therefore, the UW Libraries need a budget increase to **maintain their level of service** and **make positive changes** to be competitive with their peers.



TOTAL LIBRARY SPENDING PER FTE STUDENT



How much would it cost for the UW libraries
to catch up to their peer averages?

UW-Eau Claire—\$1,653,269

UW-Green Bay—\$3,089,071

UW-La Crosse—\$1,120,454

UW-Madison—N/A

UW-Milwaukee—\$6,255,288

UW-Oshkosh—\$4,455,067

UW-Parkside—\$75,463

UW-Platteville—\$3,035,673

UW-River Falls—\$325,419

UW-Stevens Point—\$247,965

UW-Stout—\$1,172,839

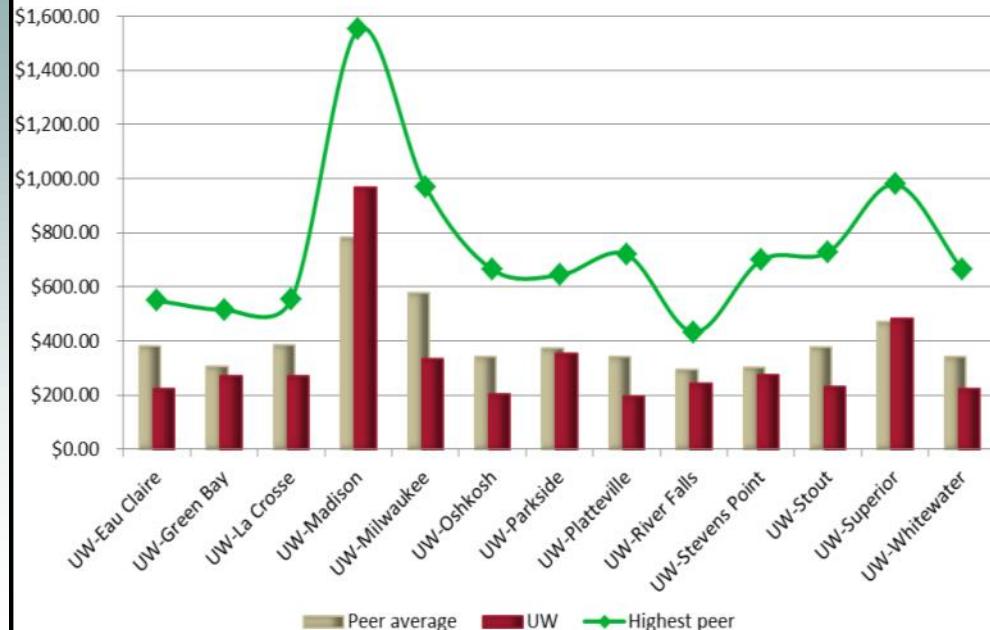
UW-Superior—N/A

UW-Whitewater—\$4,082,929

TOTAL = \$25,513,437

An annual budget increase of **\$25.5 million** is needed for the UW System to catch up just to its peers' *average* spending for FY14.

FIGURE 1. TOTAL LIBRARY SPENDING PER FTE STUDENT IN FY12



How much are the UW libraries spending?

The UW libraries are **not sufficiently funded** compared to those of its peer institutions. Library funding is important for attracting and retaining staff, purchasing materials, and enabling a library's day-to-day operations.

Figure 1 compares the UW libraries' total spending per FTE student to their peers' spending per FTE. The highest peer for each school is shown for comparison. Except for Madison and Superior, all UW libraries spent less than their peer averages, and all spent far less than their highest-spending peers.

Eleven of the thirteen four-year UW campuses have a smaller library budget than their peer averages.

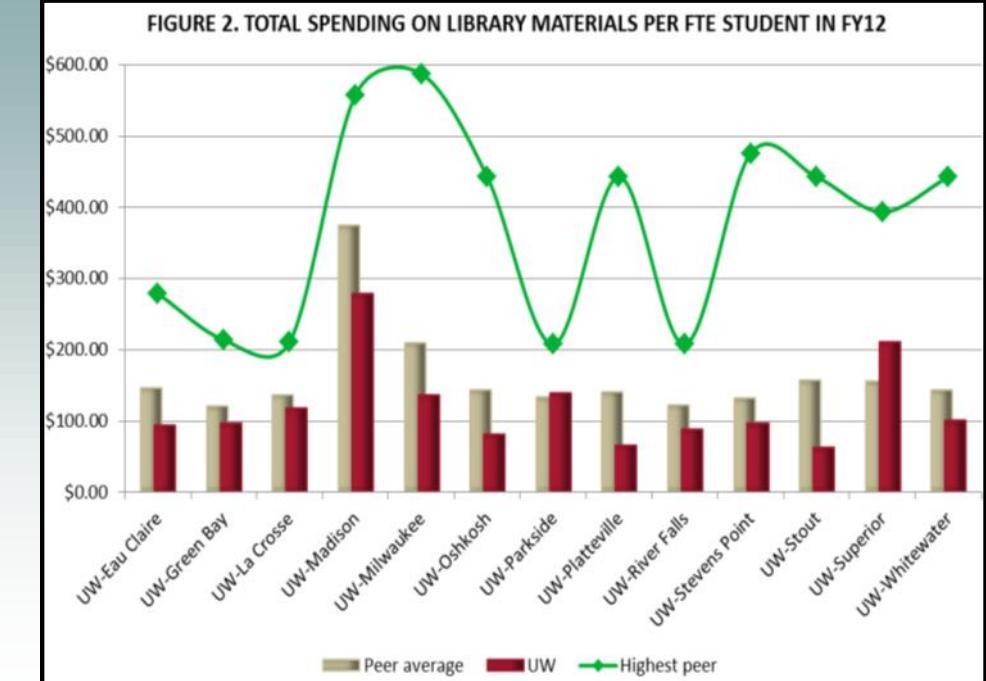
For example, the UW-Parkside library spent \$353.17 per FTE, just below its peer average of \$372.14, but far below its highest peer, Rutgers University-Camden, which spent \$642.97 per FTE.

The need for timely resources is constant!

Did you know that UW System students have access to 9 million unique items through the libraries?

But students and faculty still had to request 195,256 books and articles through interlibrary loan in FY12...

Interlibrary loan costs an average of \$30 per item for academic libraries—this means that UW libraries had to pay over \$5.86 million for one-time use of items they didn't own!



How much are libraries spending on materials?

Spending too little on library materials results in fewer resources available for students, faculty, and researchers. Interlibrary loan can help fill gaps in the collection, but it also takes time and increases libraries' operating costs.

Figure 2 compares the UW libraries' total spending on library

materials per FTE student to their peers' spending on materials per FTE. The highest peer for each school is shown for comparison. Except for Parkside and Superior, all UW libraries spent less than their peer averages, and all spent far less than their highest-spending peers.

For example, the UW-Whitewater library spent \$99.07 per FTE on materials, below its peer average of \$142.24, and far below its highest peer, Michigan Technological University, which spent \$442.74 per FTE.

Eleven of the thirteen four-year UW campuses spent less on library materials (books, videos, periodicals, and electronic resources) than their peer averages.

NUMBER OF PRINT MATERIALS PER FTE STUDENT



How many books would it take for the UW libraries to catch up to their peer averages?

UW-Eau Claire—N/A

UW-Green Bay—49,986

UW-La Crosse—81,690

UW-Madison—N/A

UW-Milwaukee—440,258

UW-Oshkosh—63,444

UW-Parkside—N/A

UW-Platteville—283,557

UW-River Falls—127,190

UW-Stevens Point—N/A

UW-Stout—155,114

UW-Superior—172,990

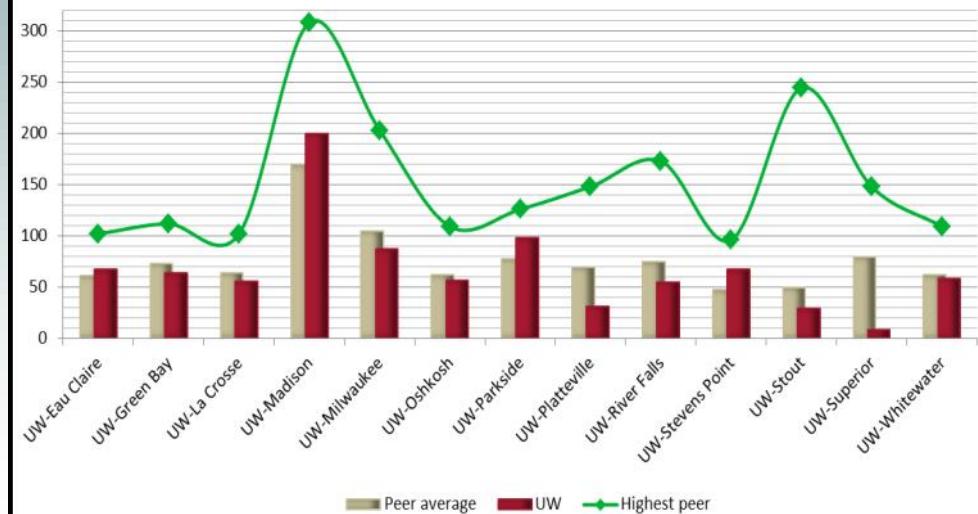
UW-Whitewater—39,394

TOTAL = 1,413,623 books

It would take over 1.41 million books (or a one-time budget increase of **\$113 million***) for the UW System just to match its peers' average print holdings.

*This assumes an average cost of \$80 per academic book.

FIGURE 3. BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT MATERIALS HELD PER FTE STUDENT IN FY12



How many books do the UW libraries own?

Figure 3 compares the UW libraries' number of books and other print materials per FTE student to their peers' number of books and other print materials per FTE. Only four of the campuses' print holdings exceed their peer averages—Eau

Claire, Madison, Parkside, and Stevens Point. Again, all campuses are far behind their highest peers

UW-Superior is the furthest behind its peers on this measure (less than a tenth of its peer average collection size) due to flood damage to the collection in recent years. Platteville's and Stout's collections are only about half the sizes of their peers' collections, and River Falls's is about two thirds the size of its peers' collection.

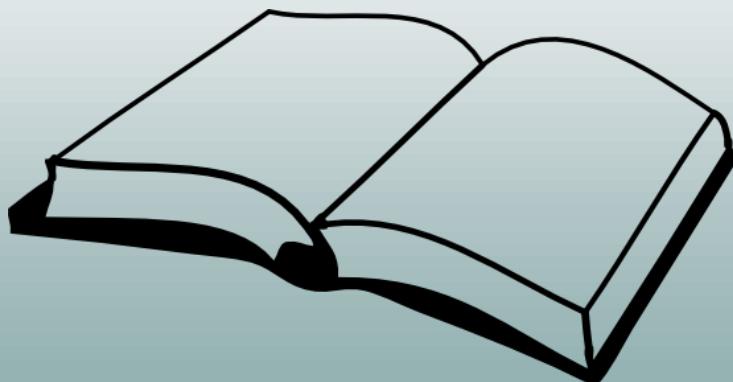
With a smaller-than-average collection, students, faculty, and researchers don't have sufficient access to the resources they need.

UW COLLEGES—a special case

The UW Colleges are some of the smallest schools (in terms of FTE enrollment) surveyed by NCES. Their small size poses unique challenges for their libraries. Even a small library must adequately cover a diverse mix of subjects, whether it serves 300 or 2000 students.

- All 13 UW Colleges libraries are above their peer average for books owned per FTE, and 11 are above the peer average for total books owned—this makes sense, given that a certain library size must be maintained regardless of the enrollment size.
- The Colleges spend between \$28.08 and \$59.56 per FTE on library materials. This average works out to less than one book per FTE student per year—indicating that their collections are probably outdated, since the number of books is relatively large but there is little being spent to update the collection.
- Ten of the Colleges received more interlibrary loan items from other libraries than the peer average, another indicator of an aging collection.
- In spite of their outdated collections, the Colleges' library materials are heavily circulated. Six of the Colleges report more annual transactions per FTE student than the peer average of 7. In fact, UW-Barron County reported 20.14 transactions per FTE!
- Also, the UW Colleges libraries have more weekly visitors than the peer average. Weekly gate counts of 119% to 496% of FTE enrollment were reported, compared to the peer average of 138%.

It is obvious that the UW Colleges libraries are heavily used—a budget increase could allow them to better serve their users by purchasing new materials.



System libraries
are doing their best to meet the needs of students, faculty, researchers, and their surrounding communities. But to continue their mission, the libraries need increased funding to be able to purchase more materials.





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