

U.N.I. Reed Public Library



PROPOSAL FOR IMPLEMENTING A LIBRARY CAFÉ

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LIBR 501: Foundations of the Information Society and Information Organizations
Final Project – Professional Proposal
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December 8, 2009

Dear U.N.I. Reed Public Library Board of Trustees,

Since the approval of the three million dollar library renovation plan in June, we have conducted numerous user surveys to gain input from our patrons as to what they would like to see at their library when the renovations are complete. Overwhelmingly, patrons requested some type of café or coffee service. Our foot traffic, demographic, and space studies support this need and we ask for your support and approval in fulfilling this request.

As you know, the U.N.I. Reed Public Library is a small, single-library district located in a residential urban area with no surrounding cafés and few local gathering spaces. Our goals for implementing a library café are to broaden our user base, enhance the library's aesthetics, and further establish the library as a central community-gathering place

We have conducted a literature review and have spoken with staff at several other libraries that have recently opened cafés within their libraries. Throughout this research we have discovered the benefits and issues associated with implementing library cafés and have determined the type of café and business plan best suited for U.N.I. Reed Library. We propose implementing a full-service café to be run by an independent vendor; the vendor will be determined through our request for proposal (RFP). A minimum base rent will be decided through negotiations with the vendor in addition to the nine percent of gross receipts that will be given to the library to ensure a successful joint venture.

The following proposal includes the detailed literature review, our goals and objectives, and policy changes associated with the addition of a café, which will need to be enacted by the board upon approval. Please review this guide and address the Building and Grounds Committee with any questions or concerns.

If the board approves this plan, we will forward all necessary information to the Construction Committee, the Library Administration, and the Legal Team who will work with the architect and contractors to determine the physical design of the space and conduct the RFP process.

We appreciate your support of U.N.I Reed Public Library and look forward to the changes ahead.

Sincerely,

Bailey Diers and Shannon Simpson
Co-chairs of the Building and Grounds Committee

LITERATURE REVIEW

REASONS FOR A CAFÉ

In *Creating the Customer-Driven Library*, Woodward (2005), discusses many facets of executing a bookstore model in the library. Chapter 15, “Food and Drink in the Library,” justifies the reasons for having a café in the library, examines in detail the main issues libraries face with a café in their facilities, and addresses how a café augments the library experience for the user.

Woodward warns that a library should always keep its mission in mind and that implementing a café in the library should not distract or inhibit the library’s mission. Additionally, “most successful libraries with cafés have learned that the library shouldn’t even consider operating it by itself” (Woodward, 2005, p.201). That said, libraries should incorporate some control over the café’s quality and service because the café is a reflection of the library as a whole.

Woodward concludes that cafés in libraries are an excellent amenity for library users and can help attract new users to the library. A library café can support and enhance the concept of library as a place. We envision the café at the U.N.I. Reed Public Library to be a space that adds to the library experience, enhancing the library’s aesthetic, and facilitating a sense of community within the library’s physical space. As Woodward (2005, p.195) suggests, “since ‘a place to be’ is an important function of the library, it should be an inviting, enjoyable place...it should be a place that gives pleasure to the senses.”

Seiss's "Is There a Coffee Shop in Your Libraries Future?" examines the benefits of opening a coffee shop to attract users, by making the library an inviting place for patrons as well as employees. Her conclusions address whether other libraries have been happy with introducing coffee shops in their facilities. Harris (2007) and Harris (2003) also address how the library can establish itself as a third place in a community—a neutral space in between work life and home life—and how this strengthens the community as a whole.

PLANNING AND LOGISTICS OF IMPLEMENTING A CAFÉ

MacLeod (1999) wrote a very helpful article, "Lattes 'n Libraries," discussing the different types of decisions that need to be made and what his library, Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon, did when they implemented a coffee bar in their main library. Multnomah County Library partnered with Starbucks to install a coffee bar inside the library.

Unfortunately, the coffee bar failed after six years of operation due to financial reasons. Wise (2005), in her article, "Books, Hot Coffee, and a Comfortable Chair" picks up where MacLeod's article left off and evaluates why the Multnomah County Library's coffee bar failed and compares the Multnomah case with a successful library café.

For a café to succeed, Wise concludes that there are certain criteria that need to be followed. We recommend abiding by these standards to give our plan the best chance of success. First and most importantly, the café needs to have its own entrance. A dedicated, outside entrance to the café serves a couple of purposes; it allows the café's hours to extend

beyond the library's hours and it creates a natural barrier between the café and the library stacks that can aid in control of food and drink in the stacks. Secondly, cafés need to be an extension of the library space, offering more than just drinks. Food products, wi-fi, live music nights, other events, and amenities will increase foot traffic, give the café a sense of identity within the library, transform the café into a communal space and appeal to wider audience. Lastly, the library needs to establish a mutually vested relationship with the café vendor through profit sharing, coordination of events, and evaluations of café services. The potential for fundraising opportunities through the café can also be explored; for more information see Gerding (2006).

The first step in establishing a positive relationship with the vendor is a well-coordinated RFP process. The library administration and legal team should consult Reese's RFP outline for a café vendor (Welch, 2006) as well as the ALA's "Trouble Brewing Over Coffee-Vendor Selection" (2001). The successfulness of the café depends on a coherent, well-formulated, and proactive strategy.

GENERAL AND ANECDOTAL INFORMATION

Our primary source for what to think about and how to begin implementing a café in a library is the American Library Association's website: *Libraries With Coffee Shops*. This page works as a good bibliography for cafés in any type of library and includes a list of several libraries with cafes and links to their websites.

There is an abundance of anecdotal information to draw from in planning a café in a library. We conducted interviews with several librarians and directors who have recently added a café in their library (personal conversations with Corcoran, Watkins, Winkle, November 2009) and also examined anecdotal evidence presented in the published literature. Welch's (2006) "Coffee Shops in Libraries" is a very useful summary of anecdotes from various libraries focusing on the details that are often overlooked in implementing a café. Many of these—such as having hard floors that are easy to clean in the café itself; having tiled, durable, stain-resistant carpet in the library; and ensuring that there is a prep kitchen and proper equipment in the café—will all be conveyed to the Construction Committee to discuss with the architect, contractor and interior design team.

Additionally, Pierce (1997), who caught on to the café trend early, draws on two case studies providing information on how the culture of libraries is changing to accommodate food and drink. He suggests that, "the traditional mindset forbidding food on library premises is simply unrealistic, and perhaps even draconian." All of this anecdotal evidence was used to create the policies that are being established to accommodate changes brought on by the inclusion of a café in our library.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: BROADEN LIBRARY USER BASE	
<p>The Library provides services to all members of the community. Currently about 42 percent of the city’s 50,000 people own a library card. We would like to increase our user base and attract a wider audience.</p>	
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase library use to at least 60 percent of city’s population. • Expand the variety of services to families, students, and senior populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a full-service café in order to appeal to a larger number of individuals.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an inviting space with seating for both groups and individuals. Allow for flexibility in seating arrangements.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the café as a venue for events that appeal to divergent demographics, including open-mic nights, book clubs, author readings, and musical guests.

GOAL 2: ENHANCE THE LIBRARY’S AESTHETIC	
<p>The recent three million dollar donation allows the library to expand for its ever-growing local community. We need to enhance the library’s aesthetic to attract users and update our outdated facilities.</p>	
OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the library’s interior for a modernized and inviting look and feel. • Create a warmer and more welcoming environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the library addition with space for a café near the entrance, accessible from both outside and inside the library.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select furniture and colors that complement the library atmosphere.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a space large enough to be used for multi-purposes, including space rentals and library functions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change library marketing materials to reflect the new appearance and promote the café.

GOAL 3: ESTABLISH THE LIBRARY AS A CENTRAL COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACE

The Library is located in a neighborhood removed from the heart of the small city. Several retail shops are located in the vicinity, but few gathering places exist. We want to establish the library as a central community gathering place.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the role of the library as a destination. • Form a lasting partnership with local businesses. • Engage in community building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend café hours beyond library hours to encourage patrons to arrive early or stay late.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate and distribute the RFP to begin the process of selecting a vendor with a preference to a local vendor.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon completion, evaluate success through user surveys and analysis. Include customer input slips in the café and library.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite local visual and performing artists to display artwork and perform at events to involve the community.

LIBRARY CAFÉ POLICIES

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POLICY STATEMENT

The U.N.I. Reed Public Library aims to meet the educational and recreational needs of the community. The café supports this mission by providing patrons with an additional space for gathering, eating, drinking, reading, and reflection. It promotes library resources, expands library services, and focuses on community building.

REASON FOR POLICY

For the comfort and safety of patrons, volunteers, and staff, and the protection of library property, the following policies have been established.¹ These policies will be enacted upon approval by the Board and on completion of the café.

WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY?

This policy will be available to: Library staff, volunteers, patrons, the Board of Trustees, and community leaders, through the library website and policy manual.

¹ Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library Policy Manual, 2008

POLICIES & REGULATIONS

1. SUSTAINABILITY

1.1 | U.N.I Reed Public Library recognizes that providing our services consumes resources that can have adverse impacts on the environment and accordingly, we have adopted a sustainability policy through which we aim to provide community leadership in sustainability.²

1.2 | The library will embrace and promote sustainability within all aspects of the library café, including construction, financial viability, engaging with key stakeholders, embracing diversity, minimizing adverse effects on the environment, providing a safe and healthy work environment, and ensuring the patrons are part of an ongoing dialog on sustainability.³

1.3 | The café space will be sustainably constructed and maintained in such a way that allows for space conversion, in the event that the café no longer fulfills the mission of the library or fails to meet expectations.

2. FOOD

2.1 | Covered drinks and non-disruptive food are allowed in the library.

2.2 | Patrons consuming food or beverages in the library must be respectful of other patrons and staff and avoid creating a disturbance or untidiness.⁴ If food is deemed disruptive staff can ask the patron to consume the food in the café (outside food and drink will be allowed in the café per café contract).

² National Library of New Zealand, 2009.

³ Ibid.

⁴ New Lebanon Library, undated.

2.3 | Spills are the patron's responsibility to clean.⁵ A spill kit will be located behind the circulation desk and all reference points.

3. FACILITIES

3.1 | It is the responsibility of patrons, library staff, and café staff to work together to maintain a level of cleanliness in the library.

3.2 | Additional signage will be posted throughout the library notifying patrons of the café and the availability of spill kits.

3.3 | The library will be equipped with extra trash and recycling bins to accommodate the revised food policy. In addition to custodial staff, library and café staff will be responsible for periodic trash/recycling removal within their units.

4. CAFÉ COMMITTEE

4.1 | A standing, long-term committee will consist of members of the library staff, a member of the Board of Trustees, and when necessary, a vendor representative.

4.2 | The café committee will oversee the vendor's adherence to the contract, perform occasional evaluations, and ensure the café's alignment with the library's mission.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

This policy was written by members of the U.N.I. Reed Public Library Building and Grounds Committee and approved by Library Administration, December 2009. These policies require approval of the Board of Trustees.

⁵ McDermott Library, 2008

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