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Info 5200 Denton

SWOT Assignment

One of the main tools for libraries to self-review is the SWOT analysis. It is a review process that identifies the advantages and shortcomings of a library by identifying the four qualities represented by the words in the SWOT acronym. SWOT is an acronym that stands for Strengths, which are the things internal to the library that help it, Weaknesses, are things internal to the library that harms it, Opportunities, which are things external to the library that benefit it and Threats, which are things external to the library that could harm it. By using a SWOT analysis libraries are more able to effectively plan out what path they should take for future success and to prevent future issues.

One of the big strengths of the ABC College Library Ornithology Special Collection is its high rate of circulation. High circulation is beneficial to the simply because it looks good to funding committees and gives the library leverage to negotiate with. The other main strength that the library has is that its staff have expertise in the library’s field. This is good since it allows for the library to distinguish itself from competitors in a way that looks good to both users and the groups overseeing the library. The staff expertise also allows for staff to be more personable when it comes to user inquiries since their knowledge can help users by recommend books with in the users search and not just let the user know about what texts they have that are relevant to their search and those texts location.

Most of the weaknesses that the library has to deal with stem from the cataloging system that it is using. Firstly the cataloging system is old which can cause issues when adding material in new formats, since the system might not be able to allow it and when teaching newer staff how to use it since most of their training will have probably been with newer systems and they will have to essentially learn an entirely new cataloging system. The system itself is also difficult for the already existing staff to learn which is a problem because if the people who are trained to use this have difficulty it will be even more difficult for users to use the system to fulfill their information needs. The last big weakness is that the library itself is organized in a confusing manner due to its size, which can cause issues for users who might not be able to find the items they are looking for due to the library’s organization.

The biggest opportunity is that the library has been approached to join a nationwide consortia of ornithology materials joining such a group will expand the already quite large collection of materials that users has access to through the library making even more likely that the library will have access to an item that matches a user’s search inquiry. One of the opportunities of the ABC College Library Ornithology Special Collection is a higher budget for library marketing and outreach. Higher marketing allows for more people to know about the collection and can lead to higher circulation that will at least look like success to an outside observer giving the collection leverage in negotiations for resources in the future.

The library is currently undergoing changes in leadership and restructuring of its departments this turbulence will leave staff unsure of their positions and duties, impacting the quality of their work. The turbulence has been so bad in fact that its effects have been noticed by the library’s users, which can lead to the library getting a poor image as a place that doesn’t adapt well to change. The library’s biggest threat is the loss of funding during a particularly turbulent period of its history. Even during budgets cuts in normal circumstances libraries will have to restructure and possibly retire departments and positions, the ABC College Library Ornithology Special Collection will have to make these changes while also having to address the weaknesses brought about from their cataloging system and complicated organizing system.

**Scenario 1: SWOT Analysis for ABC College Library Ornithology Special Collection**

Our special collection of bird species books is unique in that it is the fourth largest collection after the Smithsonian and the only collection in the State of Texas. Our staff are highly motivated and independent thinkers with expertise in ornithology, though often siloed in their positions. The organization of ABC College Library can often be complex due to our size and the inflexibility of our policy and procedures. The users are of a high domain knowledge and dedicated to understanding and learning about Ornithology. Our circulation statistics of 25,000 per month is exceptionally high as 80% of these statistics are from our special collections. Our cataloging system is ancient and needs upgrading, but we make do with what we have. Our staff could use some training on the system to understand the complexity of the fields and what our users typically search for within the special collection. We have been approached to become a part of a nationwide consortia of ornithology materials, however have not decided due to our restructuring. The leadership changes and realignment of departments has caused much confusion among not only staff, but our core users. Funding has been cut and we are unsure of what the structure may look like moving forward. Our marketing efforts and outreach still exceed what other departments are doing, but more can be done to promote this collection.

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| **Strengths**  High marketing and outreach budget, high circulation, staff are well informed in the collection’s field of focus | **Weaknesses**  Cataloging system is old and confusing to staff, Library is organized in a confusing manner due to inflexible policies and the size of the collection |
| **Opportunities**  Been given the chance to join a nationwide group that would give access to even more materials for users | **Threats**  Funding has been lost and recent changes to management and department organization has caused confusion in both staff and users |