Cases on Research Support Services in Academic Libraries:
Peking University Library

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Peking University Library (the Library) conducts organizational restructuring in 2019, and the Collaborative Service Center (CCS) is designated as the provider of research support services, which is operated in interaction with the talent training system and the process of comprehensive reform. A string of innovations in research support services are implemented by CCS's two teams in an overall manner. This chapter introduces status of research support services in China and the Library's practices in research support services. This chapter introduces the new framework of the research support services from four aspects—service object, service provider, service content, and service strategy—and outlines its plans and visions for further efforts in this regard.

INTRODUCTION

With easier access to academic resources and more convenient academic exchanges, users are less dependent on libraries for traditional resources and services, so libraries are increasingly marginalized in universities. As a result, university libraries must identify a new focus of services, integrate into the core business of universities and increase their influence on university academic research. Research support services emerge in such a context.

With the development of information technology (IT), great changes have taken place in the environment facing university libraries in China. In January 2017, the State Council printed and issued the *Measures for the Implementation of the Overall Plan for Building World-class Universities and First-class*

Disciplines (Provisional), making it a national strategy to push, a batch of high-level universities and disciplines to appear on or top the list of the world's best universities. This is the general environment facing university libraries.

In December 2017, Peking University (PKU) officially released the *Peking University Plan for First-Class University Construction (Compact Edition)*. In the overall context of the "Double First-class University" strategy, university libraries, as academic institutions that provide document information services for universities in talent training, scientific research, cultural inheritance and innovation & entrepreneurship, play an important role in providing disciplinary support. Developing into first-class libraries that can support the construction of "Double First-class" universities and provide first-class services has become an important task for university libraries at present. Users are confronting rapid development in science, technology and IT application, revolutionary changes in the way of acquiring and imparting knowledge and the teaching-learning relationship (Chen, 2018). Approaches to learning, models of teaching and research paradigms of researchers have undergone notable changes. How university libraries can support scientific research and engage in the historical process of scientific and technological progress is another crucial issue worth pondering. How university libraries can be integrated into the core business of corresponding universities and increase their influence on academic research becomes the main direction of their present and future development. Research support services are a new service product that libraries launch against this backdrop. University libraries in China have begun to pay more and more attention to research support services.

Peking University Library (the Library), as the most renowned and the largest university library in China, has explored the framework of research support services, offered such services and made positive headway since 2015. During 2016-2018, Peking University Library regularly completed and released multiple information products, including Reports on Subject Competitiveness of Peking University, Reports on Patent Competitiveness of Peking University, Reports on Research Frontiers of Peking University, and the Weiming Academic Bulletin. These reports have won recognition and praise from teacher researchers, research management and decision-making bodies of Peking University as well as from other libraries. The Library is a living organism. In response to the new changes of global, national, and local contexts, in 2019, the Library conducted a new round of business restructuring and upgrading and expanded and optimized the business in connection with research support services.

The Library includes two buildings. The Old Library Building of Peking University (the West Building) was completed in 1975, with an overall floor area of over 24,000m^2 and 2,400 seats, and with a capacity for 3.6 million books. The New Library Building (East Building) was completed in 1998. It was impeccably connected to the old one, increasing the overall floor area to as large as 53,000m^2, making Peking University Library the largest one among Asian universities, which served as a backbone for the university's effort to build the first-rate university in the world.

With the new library building and the modern possibilities of network technology, the reading environment has been further enhanced. The increased space has proven to be fruitful in the number of literature collected, in the width of open areas, in reading seats, etc. In addition to the books, the Library has also obtained a large number of local and foreign databases, eclipsing all other university libraries in China. The Library provides BBS forums for its readers, making interaction possible and using it as a means of consultation and reader training. In order to raise awareness of its collections and improve the ability of its patrons to retrieve and use its resources, the Library has organized "one-hour conferences", which is one of the readers' favourite activities.

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