**COVER PAGE**

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Innovation Study Title **City of Virginia Beach and Tidewater Community College Joint Use Library**

Category

Partnerships

Jurisdiction Name City of Virginia Beach, Virginia

City/County Manager

James K. Spore\_

Population

440,000

**Submit Innovation Study for an Alliance Innovation Award Yes [ X ] No [ ]**

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**B. CASE STUDY – City of Virginia Beach/Tidewater Community College Joint Use Library**

**Intent of the Project**

In 2004, City Manager Jim Spore and then TCC President Deborah DiCroce discovered that the City and College were planning to build independent libraries across the street. These leaders articulated a vision of a truly integrated library, where any customer, whether a student, faculty member, or citizen of any age would encounter seamless, quality library services. The challenge was to integrate the “behind the scenes” processes, technologies, staffing, budget strategies, collections, cataloging systems and cultures so that the vision of each customer’s experience could be realized. As a result of an intensive, integrated planning process, the City of Virginia Beach and Tidewater Community College (TCC) are now constructing a 120,000 square foot Lifelong Learning Center on the College’s Virginia Beach campus that will implement this vision when it opens in May, 2013.

**Costs**

The cost to construct the JUL is $53M ($42M from the Commonwealth of Virginia and $11M from the City of Virginia Beach). The City’s share of the annual operating costs is estimated to be $2.5M. The College’s operating costs have not yet been determined.

**Savings**

There is a long term sustainable savings in building one library versus building separate College and City libraries as originally planned in the early 2000s. Additionally, this library will be open to the public 72 hours per week, seven days per week, many more hours than the City’s public libraries are currently open. Certainly, through shared staffing, long-term sustainable savings will be realized. Annual operating costs will be analyzed to determine potential cost savings upon opening.

**Innovative Characteristics**

Although joint use libraries operate in the United States, the planning team believed that it could create a new model for lifelong learning. The most innovative characteristic of this project is the comprehensive planning process that was used to move the JUL forward.

In March 2004, the City Manager and College President appointed a Joint Use Library Planning Committee to study its feasibility. In August, the Planning Committee, made up of City and College personnel, formally recommended entering into an agreement to build a JUL and that pre-planning begin.

In 2005, the City contracted with Anderson Brule’ Architects (ABA) to assist with a formal feasibility study. In July of that year, ABA conducted a week-long series of focus groups that included City and College management, City and College library staff members, College faculty, and members of the general public.

Vision and Mission

The process allowed the creative exploration and definition of “the problem” before ever engaging in the solution. The purpose of the facility grew to redefine expectations of service delivery and outcome, including the redefinition of community literacy. Through the problem solving phase, assumptions were questioned, key issues of community sustainability were discussed and preconceived notions of a library were set aside to allow truly creative exploration to occur. The process of “problem definition” became as important as the solution. The vision and mission of the project were a direct response to this deeper dialogue. It allowed the 60 person task force made up of diverse, cross functional individuals to reach a high level of agreement and excitement towards a shared mission and vision.

Strategic Operational Plan and Plan of Service

As the redefinition emerged, so did new challenges that had no benchmark for success. When the team moved from problem definition to solution, each aspect of service delivery had to be studied and crafted to meet the goals and challenges established through the vision and mission. The discovery process and the energy associated with it had to be passed on to the staffs of both libraries. They had the difficult task of reinventing the delivery of seamless service in this newly defined learning center. Merging two cultures to provide a higher level of community service was daunting. Processes included team building, new layers of problem definition and a creative exploration that eliminated preconceptions and allowed for a redefinition of service delivery.

Preliminary Space Plan

Although the City’s portion of funding for the JUL construction had been appropriated, the expected State funding was not approved until the fall of 2007. Therefore, the next planning phase did not begin until the spring of 2008. Led once again by ABA, enthusiasm had to be rekindled and the real work of planning a JUL started. The Programming Team Workshops focused first on building trust as new participants were added. The workshops concentrated on intensive team building exercises. The second goal was to acknowledge issues, real and perceived by the library staff. In week 2, workshop participants went into the community and interviewed people of all ages at grocery stores, coffee shops and other public spaces about their desires for the JUL. An afternoon was devoted to narrowing down the mission and vision of the project through an interactive, progressive process. Finally, the group started creating spatial relation drawings and building a conceptual library using toys. The results were a *Preliminary Draft Space Plan* in October 2008. By early 2009, the architects had been hired, the space plan was further refined and construction began in May 2011.

The JUL will have nearly 400 public access computers, an Information Commons, a popular library and academic collection, four computer labs/classrooms, a public meeting room, nearly forty group study rooms, laptop lounges, hundreds of reader seats, a 5,000 square foot children’s room/early literacy learning center, and a café. The most unique feature will be the “Arc of Knowledge” which is a large scale panoramic wall that will display live and recorded projections of events and media that impact the community. It will be the catalyst for community dialogue and engagement, providing interactive, real-time information to the public. Its scale and dynamic nature will also act as a form of public art.

**Obstacles**

The major challenges have been:

* The delay in State funding, resulting in a two year halt in planning and delayed completion of a public library for the area
* The merging of two distinctly different types of libraries – one devoted to community service, the other dedicated to faculty and student usage, with their differing cultures, styles, practices and philosophies
* The merging of City and College technologies, including two different Integrated Library Systems
* Understanding and adapting to different City and College budget and human resources processes
* Identification of a governance model for operation of the facility and an operation plan that insures that the service expectations of all constituencies are met.
* Orientation of new team members in the vision, mission and goals for the project as some of the original members have left due to retirements, etc.

**Outcomes**

Both the City and College communities will benefit from the Joint Use Library. It will be user- centered, provide universal access and design, demonstrate sustainability (designed for LEED Gold), use technology to deliver improved services, provide greater collective resources with streamlined operations, and offer equitable, seamless, and fully integrated services. The result is expected to be a success for both organizations beyond this building. The JUL is also one of a series of catalysts to develop the unique Princess Anne Commons Academic Village which includes the community college, higher education institutions, non-profit headquarters, a hospital, an Advanced Technology Center (City, TCC and Schools partnership), athletic facilities and entertainment venues.

**Applicable Results with Real World Practicality**

The Joint Use Library will be a model for other communities around the country: it proves that two vastly different organizations can create and fulfill a common mission of providing lifelong learning opportunities in a cost effective and comprehensive manner. There also is every potential that the project will impact economic growth and vitality, create social and economic benefits, and enhance organizational and community sustainability.

**Was a Private Consultant Used?**

Anderson Brulé Architects (ABA) from San Jose, CA was hired by the City to conduct the Feasibility Study, facilitate the development of the Strategic Operational Plan and Space Plan as described above.

**C. Presentation Style**

This session will combine presentation using PowerPoint or Prezi and video, interactive learning and questions and answers. The presentation will set the context of the case study and answer participant questions about the JUL project. It will also outline the basic process steps and facilitation techniques used in our JUL project and recommended in identifying and developing partnering opportunities. The presentation will include a visual description of some of the design and operations solutions of the JUL in response to the challenges identified.

The interactive session will explore types of joint use projects of interest to the participants through a paired team exercise. Scenarios will be developed with participants in small groups and explored interactively. Process steps for achieving joint use projects will be developed in small groups to increase the participants’ understanding and shared with a larger group for shared learning.

**Interview Notes:**

**Problem/Why did you seek partnerships/Innovative Qualities:**

In this economic environment we have to seek partnerships to provide community service, partnerships are a must. Joining forces are the way governments have to go in this economic times. Duplication of service by building libraries across the street from one another. Needed to identify a process to reconcile culture, pay, technologies, budget strategies. Needed an intense integrated planning process. Engaged a consultant to identify the necessities for creating a lasting sustainable partnership for the long haul. Planned approach to partnering. Helps create and identify the vital aspects to a key partnership.

Lessons Learned: Partnerships take a long time. Partners can come and go. Sustaining a partnership is a bit art and science. Partners have to be good stewards for the partnership to the next wave/future waves of partners. Succession planning in partnerships is a key. Need a rigor to creating and sustaining a successful partnership effort. Record the dialogue and the reasoning helps with the longevity of the partnership. Takes buy-in at the service level. Do leadership visioning as well as planning for delivery of the services at the provider level. Understand the constituency groups and address their needs but don’t be dictated by them.

Transferability: look at joint partnerships on a wider scale to handle the scalibilty. Proof the model can scale up or down.

Presentation: engage the audience by working on partnership scenarios that could be addressed in their communities. Conceptually: patterned behavior and way of thinking that could be taught for creating sustainable partnerships. Present the model using the Virginia Beach example, but then do a number of interactive exercises with the audience to work through the model using scenarios that are derived.

Would include three exercises.

1. Get to know one another – key issues within their organizations
2. Brainstorm and select potential partnership scenarios – identification of opportunities and challenges
3. Vision and strategic goals development for that scenario

Feel confident they could get it done in an hour and 15.

**Learning objectives:**

* Leave with the steps, techniques and processes for where to begin when constructing a sustainable partnership effort
  + Work through the complexity of the process