

Civic Spirit Spurs Satellite:
A Tale of an Off-Campus Library

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The fall 1990 opening of Western Kentucky University's Glasgow Campus Library, located 30 miles from the main campus, personifies the important premise that service to extended campus students must be of an equivalent qualitative degree to that provided on the main campus. This account of the nearly three years of planning preceding the opening of the Glasgow Campus Library includes the primary ingredient behind the successful opening: the raising of over \$100,000 for library materials by the citizens of the Glasgow area. And quite a story it is, a story of vision and hard work, an impressive show of community support for higher education and library services.

Our review begins in 1884 when the Glasgow Normal School moved from Glasgow to Bowling Green and in 1892 became part of the Western Kentucky State Normal School, now Western Kentucky University. Through the years many in Glasgow continued to hope in vain for a college in their town.

By 1967 the idea of establishing such a college was presented to the Glasgow city council, which endorsed the proposal unanimously along with all local civic organizations and area school officials. A presentation was made to the Kentucky Council on Public Higher Education without success.

Shortly after, a bill was introduced in the Kentucky Legislature which

approved authorization to establish the Glasgow Community College as a branch of the University of Kentucky. Although approved, it was never funded.

There was never any visible concerted effort concerning the Community College. In the late 1970s, local interested individuals approached representatives of the Lindsey Wilson College in nearby Columbia, Kentucky, about the possibility of moving the campus to Glasgow. That effort was not successful either.

Meanwhile, WKU's extended campus program became a major emphasis of the University, and during the past decades Western has offered extended campus courses in the Glasgow region in a variety of facilities including high school classrooms, hospital conference rooms, public library meeting rooms, and shopping centers.

WKU had an uneven history of library services to students enrolled in extended campus classes, ranging from intermittent to non-existent with service varying from transporting numerous duplicate copies to classes checking out specific titles to the traveling professor who was responsible for the books being circulated to students. Most extended campus students were left with little or no library service. They had the option to travel miles to use the main WKU campus libraries or to use often meager resources found in area colleges, public and vocational schools, and public libraries. In no way was WKU offering quality library services to the extended campus students.

Early in 1987 WKU's extended campus library service was reviewed as it related to statements from a regional accrediting association and guidelines for

extended campus library services. This resulted in the Glasgow Mary Wood Weldon Memorial Public Library cooperating in a pilot program to provide campus-quality library services to the students of the WKU extended campus program in Glasgow. Services included a toll free (800) number for access to main campus collections and reference service, courier services for materials from the WKU main campus, and FAX equipment in the Glasgow Public Library for students to receive free copies of articles sent from the WKU main campus library.

WKU's educational program in Glasgow really came into the spotlight in late November of 1987. Dr. Steve House, Executive Assistant to Western Kentucky University President Kern Alexander, made a speech before delighted Glasgow civic and business leaders that made headlines all across Kentucky. Dr. House announced that WKU was planning to establish a campus in Glasgow in time for the opening of the 1988 spring semester. House's announcement stated that WKU was committed to providing the city of Glasgow and surrounding communities with programs which would allow students to complete associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree programs on the Glasgow campus. The permanent campus was to include classrooms, administrative offices and library services.

The announcement immediately sparked controversy throughout the state. Headlines proclaimed: "Western Bringing Four Year College to Glasgow." "The Best News in Years." "Western Moves to Glasgow - just what the State doesn't need." "Stop Kublai Kern" (Alexander). The Louisville Courier Journal said: "Hardly anything in the field of Kentucky public higher education could be more ludicrous

than Western Kentucky University's unilateral move to establish a new campus at Glasgow. It flies in the face of all that has been achieved over decades to establish coordination and eliminate empire building." The Frankfort State Journal described the "brash proposal by Dr. Kern Alexander to create a branch of Western Kentucky University at Glasgow as a potential bomb that could destroy the advances made in the past 20 years in the university system and stall further improvement."

However, the WKU Board of Regents supported Alexander's Glasgow vision. Board chairman Joe Iracane said, "If our goal is to educate, then we ought to be tickled to death with what we've done in Glasgow." The Kentucky Council on Higher Education approved the expansion program at Glasgow. And Western Kentucky University at Glasgow began classes in January 1988 at the vacant Liberty Street School, which was leased to Western for \$1.00 a month. Over 1000 students were expected to register for classes, and WKU's President had been named an honorary citizen of Glasgow.

With all the excitement about the new "Library Street Campus," librarians at WKU were following every word about the education expansion at Glasgow. One Courier Journal writer dubbed the WKU President "Alex in Wonderland," due to his determination to offer degree programs in Glasgow. The writer quoted the chairman of the Council on Higher Education as wondering "whether a student never exposed to a proper college library would get a quality education. It costs a small fortune to equip a library and big annual funding to maintain it. Money for a suitable college library in Glasgow could only come from the hides of existing schools." An editorial

in the Lexington Herald Leader suggested that "an institution without a real library building hardly needs to expand to another town" (this one puzzled the librarians but they imagined the writer was referring to the Helm Library building on the WKU campus which was originally a gymnasium affectionately known as the "Big Red Barn").

Planning progressed beyond the cooperative program then in place with the Mary Wood Weldon Public Library to a plan providing library services from a branch campus library to be housed in the University's campus building in Glasgow. A collection was envisioned supporting the Glasgow undergraduate curriculum with support from the main library collections in Bowling Green via present technological and traditional means in a library managed by the Glasgow Campus Librarian. The initial costs foreseen for personnel, facilities, equipment, and resources were \$187,000, with continuing costs at \$176,000.

Meanwhile Western Kentucky University at Glasgow celebrated a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting in February, 1988. The opening culminated in "Glasgow Campus Week" which included a number of special activities and receptions. Bed banners appeared up and down Glasgow streets showing the WKU logo and "Welcome Home, Western." A large crowd gathered in the old Liberty Street School gym for the special ceremony, and General Russell E. Dougherty, former Commander-in-Chief of the Strategic Air Command, a Glasgow native and Western alum, spoke stirringly about the new educational opportunities now available in Glasgow. "WKU is making college an expectation rather than an exception," Dougherty said, lighting a flame of

enthusiasm that spread like wildfire through the crowd. Red and white balloons dotted the sky, WKU red towels were draped on every chair and the WKU mascot, Big Red, the Western Cheerleaders and band added to the festive spirit on that frosty Sunday afternoon.

The most exciting moment for those University Libraries faculty and staff who were in attendance came when Golda Walbert of the Glasgow Business and Professional Women's Club rose from the audience to speak. Miss Walbert announced that the Glasgow BPW club was spearheading a fund drive to raise \$100,000 to be used for library resources at the WKU Glasgow Campus with September 1988 as the target date to meet their goal.

Members of the Glasgow Club asked themselves "What can we do?" to assist the Western move to Glasgow. Their answer: raise enough money to establish a library for the Glasgow campus. "How much must we raise?" The answer was \$100,000. "Can we do it?" they asked and answered, "Yes, we can." Their effort was to become a year-long project, but project co-chairs Golda Walbert and Ledean Hamilton led the way from the start of the fund drive in March 1988, to its remarkably successful conclusion in February 1989. Their project would win well-deserved awards for the Glasgow BPW club for public relations and for their outstanding volunteer effort.

During the year of the fund raising drive, the club used a number of different "angles" to raise the \$100,000. The organization made an initial contribution of \$5,000 toward the drive, and through the steering committee's efforts, literally no

part of the Glasgow community or those in the surrounding counties was untouched by the group's drive to secure the funds. Industry, business, schools, clubs and organizations were all contacted and urged to contribute to the fund project. Other activities included: Bean Soup Day, a bingo party, a Valentine Charity Ball, school club donations, raffles, memorials and honorariums.

A sign, the WKU Bookworm, was placed on the lawn of the public square in Glasgow during the entire project to show monetary progress. The sign was about ten feet tall and was located on the busiest corner of Glasgow.

The total raised by the Glasgow BPW club exceeded \$104,000 which represented community commitment from many sources. Two companies gave \$10,000 each while five companies or groups gave \$5,000 each. Other major gifts included \$3,000 from one organization, \$1,000 from another, 15 donors contributed \$1,000 each, and 16 groups gave \$500 each to the effort. Over seven thousand dollars was contributed on the first day of the campaign and more than \$7,100 was contributed on the day the goal was reached.

A special "topping out" celebration was held on the Glasgow square during a snowstorm to announce the achievement of the BPW's major \$100,000 goal. WKU President Tom Meredith stated that the fund raising effort was one of the most ambitious ever directed toward Western library support from private sources. "It will serve as a testimony to the value placed on higher education in the Glasgow community." The Glasgow newspaper noted "few people in Glasgow doubted that the Glasgow BPW would accomplish their task. Over the years the BPW has proven

that it is much more than a 'meet and eat' organization."

Immediately following the announcement of the successful BPW drive University Libraries Director, Dr. Michael Binder, appointed a Committee on an Opening Day Collection for the Glasgow Campus Library. During 1989, the Director continued to push for progress toward the development of a Glasgow Campus Library, and in August he appointed the Glasgow Campus Library Planning Committee. A detailed plan was prepared for the development of the library collection, facility and services. The Library was actually becoming a reality!

From August 1989 to opening day in August 1990, was a year full of planning, budgeting, and learning. When the Planning Committee first began its work, they realized that not one of the "group of six" had ever planned the opening of a library before, an opportunity granted to few academic librarians. But, they were certainly ready to tackle the job and their enthusiasm was monumental. They had been thinking about this for some time!

The committee was armed with a "plan of action," a blueprint for the implementation of a wide range of library services at the Glasgow campus. Personnel was to be one professional librarian and four student assistants. "Resources" in the first year were to be financed from the over-\$100,000 raised by the Glasgow community with the expectation that interest from funds remaining were to help cover acquisitions and subscription costs in future years. WKU Libraries anticipate that about a third of the cost of maintaining the resources at the Glasgow site will be borne by the endowment. Facilities and equipment costs for the operation were to

be funded by the University.

One interesting "hurdle" was the load bearing capability of the location to be used as the Glasgow Campus Library. In late 1988 an architect's study on the floor of the room was requested and the "live load capacity" was found not to meet Kentucky code specifications for a library. The report noted that "we should not load the room with books at this time."

Over the next year there were conversations with members of the firm who had built an addition to the original building. They presented suggestions that the "proper" placement of book shelves at certain angles should make the flooring acceptable. That brought rebuttals by the WKU Director of University Libraries who was determined that the floor of the room be brought up to specifications and also brought concerns by those responsible for finding ways to pay for the rather expensive project. A victorious compromise was engineered by the Director of the Glasgow Campus whereby a supportive local contractor completed the required construction in April 1990, at a very reasonable cost, making part of the cost a gift to the University. The community continued its "support" for the Glasgow Campus Library.

So by mid 1990, the facility was prepared, the equipment purchased, and the Glasgow Campus Librarian hired. Not a traditional branch library, the Glasgow Campus Library is best described as an "electronic library" with reference assistance using ERIC on CD-ROM and the Magazine Index Collection. The toll-free number for Extended Campus Library Services continues to be available with preliminary

reference assistance from the Glasgow Librarian. The FAX machine originally located in the Public Library was moved to the Glasgow Campus Library for receipt of photocopied materials for Glasgow extended campus students. Periodical indexes and abstracts previously housed at the Public Library were moved to the Glasgow Campus Library. Twice weekly courier service between the main campus library and the Glasgow campus continues, with drop-off and pick-up situated in the Glasgow Campus Library.

Additional library services available at the Glasgow Campus Library include bibliographic instruction provided by the Glasgow Campus Librarian to any classes taught on the Glasgow Campus; faculty reserve materials for Glasgow Campus classes may be made available at the Library; inter-library loan requests for Glasgow Campus students are reviewed by the librarian and forwarded to the WKU Libraries Interlibrary Loan Office; document delivery continues to be provided to Glasgow students and faculty by mail from the main campus library. The Glasgow Campus Library is open to citizens of the Glasgow area as well as to WKU students.

In August 1990, service began at the Glasgow Campus Library. During the first two weeks of operation 385 instances of individual assistance were recorded and the library was literally full of students during all the scheduled hours. The grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony in September 1990 marked the official opening of the new library at Western's extended campus at Glasgow. WKU President Tom Meredith presided at the ribbon cutting and attended the reception following. There were tours of the facility, demonstrations, and refreshments. A large crowd,

including the WKU President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, members of the WKU Board of Regents and Deans' Council, WKU faculty and students, and the WKU mascot, Big Red, attended. The festivity was covered well by the area television station and newspapers from Bowling Green and Glasgow.

Of course, the real work had just begun. Service, schedule, request and delivery services, and library instruction will have to be refined. But as Dr. Jim Heck, Director of the WKU Glasgow Campus, put it, "the WKU Glasgow Library opening was a very important event for the campus symbolizing a significant step forward in our ability to provide quality higher educational opportunities to the citizens of south central Kentucky." Glasgow area support had assured the opening of a state-of-the-art library which serves as a model for future library services to Western Kentucky University extended campus centers.

As one recent newspaper headline stated: "Glasgow Campus Flourishes Proving Critics Wrong" and another: "Success of WKU at Glasgow Silences Critics." The decision three years ago that brought WKU to Glasgow looks like a good one. The number of classes has increased many times over. Enrollment has soared, with more than half of Glasgow's students coming from the rural area east of Glasgow.

One of the editorial writers during the earlier period of the WKU expansion to Glasgow argued that "Kentuckians have enough access to higher education. The problem is the quality of the education provided." The WKU Glasgow Campus and the Glasgow Campus Library have proved that our extended campus students in Glasgow have both, access and quality.