

## CASE STUDY FOR CHAPTER 5

### Alpha University Library System

The Alpha University library system is closing the smallest of its twelve branch libraries for financial reasons. University administration has mandated a 5 percent retrenchment in all units and has approved closing the Museum of Natural History (MNH) Library, which is located in the same building as the university's Museum of Natural History. It has a very small natural history collection with a focus on ornithology and herpetology plus some materials on museology and ecology. The collection contains 12,500 volumes and has 301 active serial subscriptions. The total serials budget is \$15,000; \$7,000 is allocated for monographs. The MNH Library is staffed by a professional, who is retiring at the end of the year and will not be replaced, and five hours of student help. The museum is a unit within the College of Biological Sciences (CBS). The library system has other libraries that are part of the equation in planning to close the MNH Library. The Entomology, Fisheries, and Wildlife (EFW) Library supports the research and teaching of the College of Natural Resources (CNR). The EFW Library has one professional, two paraprofessionals, and forty hours of student staff. The Biochemistry Library, staffed by one paraprofessional and twenty hours of student help, supports the work of the CBS and is narrowly focused on biochemistry and biotechnology with an emphasis on the submolecular level. Both facilities have space for collection growth.

Faculty members in each of these two colleges are fiercely loyal to their respective colleges and protective of "their" branch libraries. Faculty members in the CBS are insisting the MNH Library collection be moved to the Biochemistry Library. The curators in the Museum of Natural History have asked that monographs and journal runs published before 1962

be given to the museum. Their rationale is that the MNH Library was a departmental library until 1962, when it was administratively transferred to the library system. The library system estimates that approximately one-third of the collection in the MNH Library is duplicated in the EFW Library, including \$8,500 in active journal subscriptions. The MNH Library has approximately fifty reference books, which are superseded editions from larger libraries in the Alpha University library system. The university library system has an automated, integrated system, which can generate reports by holding location. Today is July 1, and the MNH Library must be closed by December 30. Materials must be relocated over the three-week holiday break at the end of December. Location changes in the online catalog can be made in December, and withdrawals can occur at any time. Journal cancellations must be made by the end of September.

#### Activity

Devise a plan for closing the MNH Library and handling the collections. Identify the stakeholders inside and outside the library system and how they will be involved in planning and implementing the project. Think about the collection and the different ways it might be analyzed—subject areas, active journals, ceased journals, duplicates, reference materials, worn items—and make recommendations on how it should be handled, including disposition. Consider communication needs within and outside the library system. Prepare a time line showing the tasks, who will do them, and when. Identify and describe the three largest problems.