

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fort Wayne Senate

FROM: Mark Jordan, Chair
University Resources Policy Committee (URPC)

DATE: March 18, 2022

SUBJ: Report on Dissolution of Printing Services

WHEREAS, the Senate Executive Committee charged the Budgetary Affairs Subcommittee (BAS) with assessing the impact of ending campus-based Printing Services in Senate Reference No. 21-9; and

WHEREAS, the Budgetary Affairs Subcommittee (BAS) is a subcommittee of URPC, and URPC has taken responsibility for the report.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate consider approval of the attached report in response to SR 21-9.

Assessment of the Impact of Dissolution of On-campus Printing Services
University Resources Policy Committee (URPC)

Overview

Printing Services at Purdue Fort Wayne closed on June 30, 2021. The Executive Committee of the Senate requested that Budgetary Affairs Subcommittee (BAS) assess the impact of this closure on finances, quality of service, and academic work using available data. In consultation with BAS and the Executive Committee, the charge was transferred to URPC. The remainder of this report describes the financial situation of Printing Services, the impacts of the transition on academic and administrative work, and the committee’s analysis of this information.

Financial impacts

Context

Prior to the closure of Printing Services, the cost of maintaining the facility was a primary concern of Facilities Management. Fees collected for service were sufficient for the cost of printing supplies (paper, ink, etc.), and salary and fringe of employees (Table 1) through fiscal year (FY) 2018. In the more recent two years negative balances occurred. While income declined annually beginning in FY 2016, expenses rose beginning in FY 2019. There was a notably steep drop in income in FY 2020 (-\$125,000 from FY 2019) which is likely to have been caused to a large degree by the closure of campus in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the entire period, the acquisition and maintenance of large volume copy machines and other equipment was not factored into user fees. It became evident that the university needed to subsidize deficits incurred to keep Printing Services running, largely due to equipment costs but also reduced usage.

Table 1. Income and expenses of Printing Services over the past six full years. Fiscal year 2020 included the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic (March – June 2020). Equipment costs are not included in the table.

		FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17	FY16	FY15
Income		\$305,673	\$430,037	\$450,136	\$475,571	\$500,395	\$477,624
Expense	Salary	\$188,661	\$191,078	\$163,045	\$173,508	\$143,163	\$158,952
	Fringes	\$99,124	\$93,687	\$85,782	\$93,327	\$75,882	\$62,500
	Supplies	\$217,124	\$249,372	\$191,936	\$196,221	\$221,702	\$210,543
	Total	\$504,909	\$534,137	\$440,763	\$463,056	\$440,117	\$431,995
Net		-\$199,236	-\$104,100	\$9,373	\$12,515	\$60,278	\$45,629

Three new copy machines were purchased for a total of \$343,438 in November 2018, under a 5-year lease to own arrangement. Although not currently in use, Facilities is paying \$6,140 per month for another 18 months to finish the payment term. These machines will be sold with the

expectation of recovering 50% of the cost after depreciation. Other equipment from Printing Services has already been sold, totaling \$30,000 in revenue.

Comparisons before and after closure

To assess the impact of the closure on printing services on users, URPC requested cost information campus-wide from Facilities in two ways. First, we looked at copy expenses between a period when Printing Services was operational (pre-pandemic July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019), and afterward once the replacement service operated by Xerox in West Lafayette was in place (July 1, 2021 to December 1, 2021) (Table 2). In addition to these services, we also collected information on the costs associated with the use of copy machines across campus including those using a copy card (Blackboard copiers) and those without a card reader. It is not possible to separate groups of users of these two types of copy machines given their mixed use across campus. We also note that the costs included here do not include printing completed by units that used outside vendors. Overall costs were lower after closure by ~\$84,000, and this is mostly due fewer jobs sent to Xerox. When combining costs for the two types of copiers, there an increase of ~\$11,000 after closure that was mostly due to the use of copiers without card readers.

Table 2. Campus-wide photocopy costs compared before (July-Dec 2019) and after (July-Dec 2021) the closure of Printing Services.

	Before closure	After closure
Printing Services or Xerox Projects	\$145,341	\$50,541
Copiers with Blackboard card readers	\$13,346	\$8,360
Copiers without card readers	\$27,800	\$43,765
Total	\$186,487	\$102,666

The second way we compared costs was by collecting information on student use of printing from campus computers. We presumed that instructors might post documents online to course management systems rather than printing them for class, necessitating a student to print the materials. IT Services provided data on printing using the same time period as with copy expenses (Table 3). This analysis does not account for printing by users off campus, but the available data suggest that printing declined after the closure of Printing Services. Overall, there was a 52% decline, with the largest change in black and white printing.

Table 3. Number of prints campus-wide from campus computers compared before (July-Dec 2019) and after (July-Dec 2021) the closure of Printing Services.

	Before closure	After closure
Black and white	1,336,949	636,483
Color	57,695	33,264
Total	1,394,644	669,747

Quality of service and impacts of change

The transition to Xerox for printing and associated services generated widespread complaints regarding customer service and its impact on academics and administrative work. Academic and administrative impacts were assessed through user feedback. In Fall 2021, Ron Friedman, Dean of the College of Science, volunteered to collect and report on issues experienced across campus. Feedback was received from Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Division of Continuing Studies, Mathematical Sciences, Psychology, Visual and Performing Arts, the Chancellor's office, and the VCFAA's office. Greg Justice, Associate Vice Chancellor of Facilities Management, has spearheaded communication with Xerox to address concerns. A summary of issues and how they were addressed is provided in the table below (Table 4).

Table 4. Service concerns forwarded by printing users at PFW and the response from Associate VC and Xerox.

Issue identified	Response/Status
Slow action and delivery of orders	Xerox has worked to improve communication and is now more familiar with the campus, reducing shipping mistakes.
Individual orders cost more	Users are now paying market rates that include cost of equipment and its maintenance. Many items have rates that are comparable or lower than the past.
Turnaround times are excessively long	At the start of the fall semester Xerox was not prepared for the volume of work and did not have adequate staff to meet demand. These issues have largely been resolved.
Bulk mailings	PFW and WL have different standards for bulk mailing, and Xerox was using WL standards. The PFW bulk mail permit is now included in the Xerox system.
Difficulties with the ARIBA ordering system	Many administrative staff were not accustomed to ordering in ARIBA. Additionally, faculty could order directly from Printing Services. With the help of PFW Purchasing, increasing familiarity with the system is now apparent and has led to improved service.
Quality of work is poorer than in the past.	This issue has not been addressed other than to reprint posters and fliers at no cost. Users may be able to use a local service if an exemption is approved in consultation with the Printing Services Coordinator.

The number of complaints regarding the new service has declined substantially since November 2021. This appears to be due to several factors. First, the feedback presented to Xerox has likely improved service. Second, following the collection of issues received by Dean Friedman through October 2021, the position of Printing Services Coordinator became active in Facilities Management upon return of the incumbent from leave. The responsibilities of the position include serving as a liaison between campus users and Xerox. The activation of the position has had a positive impact on routine communication surrounding printing. Finally, campus users are likely more familiar with the ordering process.

Analysis

The campus was well served by Printing Services. It filled orders quickly, produced reliably high quality work, and had good relationships with campus users. The question of closure was whether the university could afford the service. URPC finds that the decision to close based on financing has merit. Income through print jobs had steadily declined over a five year period and this was exacerbated by the abrupt shift to online teaching and communication necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the return to on-campus instruction and events may increase demand for printing over time, users are now more familiar with online tools for course delivery and initial evidence suggests that costs have not shifted to students through increased printing of course materials on campus. In addition to reduced use of the service, equipment purchase and maintenance was not factored into user fees. While university subsidy of printing equipment is arguable, a funding model that shifted these costs to users would have put stress on the budgets of units across campus.

The replacement of Printing Services with Xerox in West Lafayette resulted in significant disruption and frustration at its outset. Issues included: 1) most users not being aware of how to make orders, 2) impractically slow return of jobs due to shipping distance and a lack of an established relationship between Xerox and campus delivery, 3) poorer quality work, and 4) unreasonable delays in resolving problems when they arose. These problems are increasingly being resolved as the campus and Xerox better understand one another. It is also possible that some users have given up trying to use Xerox and have found alternative ways to produce the content they need. There is discussion of the establishment of partnerships between Xerox and local vendors within the contract that should further improve service if established. Finally, users on campus that have specific needs that are difficult for Xerox to handle have been able to get exemptions from the new contract through discussion with the Printing Services Coordinator.

The transition to Xerox could have been better handled had input been sought from users on campus and there had been more effective education of how the new service would work. To our knowledge, faculty and staff were largely unaware of the plan to close Printing Services. Had users been able to consider the various impacts of the change, we suggest that many of the problems could have been avoided. Furthermore, communication about how to use the Xerox service was insufficient which compounded the difficulties experienced in Fall 2021.