

University of Regina Library

Final Report of the Liaison Librarian Working Group

The Liaison Librarian Program: Trends and Opportunities

Cara Bradley

Mary Chipanshi

Kate Cushon

William Sgrazzutti

April 20, 2017

Introduction

During fall 2016, Brett Waytuck (University Librarian) asked Cara Bradley (Liaison Services Coordinator) to lead a review of the University of Regina (U of R) Liaison Librarian Program (Liaison Program). The liaison librarians were consulted and recommended that a small working group of liaison librarians be struck to carry out the review. The Liaison Librarian Working Group (Working Group) was formed following a call for expressions of interest and an election. The members of the Working Group are:

- Cara Bradley (Chair)
- Mary Chipanshi
- Kate Cushon
- William (Bill) Sgrazzutti

The Working Group agreed to the following principles:

- Solicit input
- Maintain neutrality in collection information, including how questions are framed
- Incorporate a diversity of approaches
- Use a stepped approach, where each phase informs subsequent work

The Working Group set as its goal to develop a document on the current state of liaison librarian services, both at the U of R and beyond, with suggestions for next steps in the evolution of the U of R Liaison Program.

This report and recommendations are not intended to limit or discourage individual librarians' initiatives or activities, but rather to provide a framework by which the development of a more formalized Liaison Program may be facilitated.

Methodology

The Working Group used a mixed-method approach, including e-mail polling, a literature review, and online surveys to collect a wealth of information, while also striving to keep the project manageable given the timeframe and other work commitments.

External data was collected by:

- E-mail messaging to CARL/COPPUL member libraries requesting information about their liaison programs (see Appendix A for the e-mail message soliciting input and Appendix B for the summary of input received).
- A review of the scholarly literature on liaison librarian programs, with a focus on content published from 2010 to the present, and also older studies when incidentally located and relevant (see Appendix C for summary of the literature review).

Internal data was collected through a series of online surveys, administered through Qualtrics. The rationale for the breakdown of survey groups and for the questions administered to each is provided below.

- The Working Group initially considered conducting in-person interviews with liaison librarians. However, it became evident that there would not be enough time or resources to conduct and transcribe interviews. Instead, a lengthy online survey of liaison librarians was conducted (see Appendix D for summary of responses). There were 10 respondents to this survey.
- An extensive survey was administered to User Services employees (see Appendix E for summary of responses). This employee group was surveyed separately from other library staff because their involvement in reference and instruction intersects directly with liaison librarian work. There were 8 respondents to this survey.
- “Other” library employees not otherwise surveyed (including out-of-scope, technical services, Archives, and Systems staff) received a brief survey questionnaire (see Appendix F for summary of responses). There were 5 respondents to this survey.
- Faculty members were surveyed using a brief, high level survey (consisting of 4 questions). All liaison librarians had the option to send this survey to specific faculty members and/or to the faculty administrator(s) in their liaison area(s) of responsibility for distribution (see Appendix G for summary of responses). There were 28 faculty respondents to this survey.
- Students were surveyed on site in the Dr. John Archer Library and completed the questionnaire online using a laptop. Working Group members invited students on the main floor of the Library to complete the survey in exchange for coffee vouchers. This option provided greater flexibility as the [U of R Survey Policy](#) would have made e-mail distribution untenable within a reasonable timeframe (see Appendix H for summary of responses). 83 students completed this survey.

Results

As expected, this multi-faceted approach to data collection generated a wealth of information. Summaries of the results from each collection effort are attached as appendices to this report. The complete raw data is available from the Working Group upon request.

The Working Group carefully reviewed the data and identified several recurring major themes or ideas, presented below. Given the volume of data, this is not an exhaustive list. However, it does highlight thoughts and concerns that repeatedly emerged. Summaries cannot, by their nature, represent every voice, but instead seek to represent the responses of the majority of respondents. The recurrent themes and a summary of their articulation (in the various response categories) is provided below. Each theme is followed by relevant recommendations.

1. Defining the liaison librarian role

Several documents in the literature review highlighted the need for libraries to take a greater role in supporting institutional research, which is viewed to have taken a backseat to library support for teaching and learning. Some articles went so far as to suggest an entire reorganization of libraries’ work to more closely align with University mission and priorities (i.e., teaching, research, service) rather than libraries’ traditional focus on collections, reference, instructional services.

Most of the responses from liaison librarians and User Services staff focused on “traditional” liaison services, identifying information literacy/instruction, reference, collections, and outreach and

communication as the core of the liaison role. These traditional services were also identified by the respondents in the “Other Library Staff” survey. This group also identified research support and collaboration, and relationship building as key elements in the librarian liaison role. There was, however, a “long tail” in the liaison librarian responses; while most identified these core services, there were other services that were mentioned by one or two respondents. The picture that emerges is of a liaison service that features a common core of services across most subject areas, with many additional offerings that are unique to the subject area and/or the librarian providing those services. This was described as “tailored services” in the “Other Staff Survey” group.

Interestingly, several User Services staff members identified communication with Help Desk staff (e.g., upcoming assignments, current courses, subject specific resources) as an important function of the liaison librarian role, and an area where they would like to see more activity. This function was not mentioned in the liaison librarian responses.

Students surveyed indicated a lack of awareness of liaison librarians’ roles and duties, and an inability to distinguish liaison librarians from Library User Services Assistants (LUSAs) who provide reference services at the Help Desk.

The liaison librarian survey responses identified several examples of how the current liaison model works well, while also suggesting areas in need of improvement, with suggestions for addressing these. Proposed longer-term changes to liaison librarian services align with the view that new and evolving services must be customized to the needs of a specific user group – one size does not fit all.

Recommendations:

1a. Investigate, communicate, and potentially further develop library services in support of university research and service.

1b. Bring liaison librarians together to review the raw data on liaison librarian roles in order to learn more about the diversity of approaches and new ideas and services that could be extended to other constituencies. Encourage each liaison librarian to explore and articulate liaison service in the context of the subject area(s) they serve and to communicate this more broadly.

1c. Explore mechanisms to enhance communication, training, and mentoring between the liaison librarians and User Services staff. Suggestions to accomplish this include: liaison librarian role at the Help Desk as another way to strengthen this relationship; creation of “teams”; liaison librarians and User Services staff representation at each other’s meetings on a rotating basis.

2. Librarian engagement (university community outside library)

Librarian engagement with students

Liaison librarians identified information literacy and instruction, individual consultations and specialized reference as services with the greatest impact on students. This was echoed in the User Services staff and “Other Library Staff” survey responses. The latter group also identified collection development activities as having significant impact on students, while the provision of general instruction was identified as having little or no impact.

Responses to later questions about the potential for librarians to staff the Help Desk indicated that, despite the above mentioned contacts, liaison librarians feel disconnected from students.

Surveyed students identified the need for more communication and interaction with the liaison librarians. Many expressed a need for more librarian involvement in classes (particularly 100-level classes) and effective communication about their services and availability.

Recommendations:

2a. Explore strategies to increase student awareness of liaison librarian roles, duties, and services available to students. Possible methods to address this include: discussion of strategies and their outcomes at Liaison Librarian monthly meetings, engaging the External Communications and Promotions Team and the @Archer Newsletter Team to facilitate outreach and communication, and working with the Student Success Librarian to increase student awareness.

3. Librarian engagement (university community outside library)

Librarian engagement with faculty

When asked about the most valuable services liaison librarians provide to faculty, both User Services staff and liaison librarians focused on traditional services, including information literacy and instruction, collections activities, and facilitating communication between the Library and academic units. Both groups emphasized the importance of this communication and relationship-building role and offered suggestions to further develop it. This view is consistent with the feedback from the “Other Library Staff” survey group, with collection development at the top of the list. Additional information on these areas is included under section 6, “New and Future Services”.

As mentioned above in section 1, “Defining the Liaison Role,” the literature review pointed to an imbalance in library support for teaching over research, and suggested numerous ways that liaison librarians can (and some argue should) support faculty research, particularly in the areas of data management and grant applications, among others. However, the need for greater attention to faculty research support did not emerge in the User Services survey results, and was only peripherally mentioned in the liaison librarian responses - though implied in the sense that individual and specialized reference is one of the most valuable services provided to faculty members. One of the respondents in the “Other Library Staff” survey group did identify partnering with faculty in the research process as an area of greatest impact on faculty.

Faculty responses regarding the most important responsibilities of liaison librarians matched the responses from User Services staff and liaison librarians. Faculty also identified the provision of research support and liaison as a way for librarians to engage with them.

Recommendations:

3a. Develop a planned and consistent approach to inform faculty of changes to library resources, programs, and services.

3b. Communicate and educate on liaison librarian roles and services. Potential strategies include:

- *Reaching out to new faculty each fall*

- *Librarians reporting at faculty meetings (e.g., faculty councils, departmental meetings).*
- *Library “open house” event for faculty (i.e., especially new faculty)*
- *Identify opportunities to connect with faculty at existing Library and University events (e.g., Author Recognition Event, teaching awards, faculty-organized events).*

4. Librarian engagement within the library (other staff, User Services)

Engagement and communication with other library staff did not emerge as an issue in the liaison librarian survey responses, but was repeatedly identified as important in the User Services staff responses. There is evidence that User Service staff are seeking additional training, two-way communication, and potentially sharing the staffing of the Help Desk with liaison librarians. The “Other Library Staff” survey responses identify greater collaboration between the liaison librarians and User Services staff as having many potential positive outcomes. Key examples identified include greater awareness of specialized resources, with regular training enhancing reference services.

Recommendations:

4a. see 1c (Explore mechanisms to enhance communication, training, mentoring between the liaison librarians and User Services staff. Creation of “teams” was one suggestion to address this issue that emerged in both the literature review and a few survey responses, while others pointed to a liaison librarian role at the Help Desk as another way to strengthen this relationship.)

4b. Look at meeting structure and consider inviting staff from other Library units to learn about the Liaison Program as well as providing an opportunity for liaison librarians to learn more about other units.

4c. Develop and implement a program for liaison librarians to engage with User Services staff through shadowing opportunities (i.e., “both ways”). Participation in such a program would be optional.

5. Subject vs. functional specialists

The literature review suggested that most libraries are striving to achieve the right balance between functional and subject liaison librarians, and that this dynamic is constantly in flux. All libraries covered in the literature review currently employ a mixture of the two approaches. Many librarians are assigned roles that combine both subject and functional duties and expertise.

The majority of liaison librarians surveyed indicated that their assignments were focused primarily on subject liaison, and that they would be open to a rebalancing of their assignment to include both functional and subject liaison specialist elements. Several options for consideration were identified. The view is that referrals between existing liaison librarians and functional specialists (e.g., Copyright Officer) are working well. However, there are areas, such as data, digital scholarship, open access, and digital literacy, where more functional expertise would be useful. Some of the new functional specialist areas identified align with the recent changes to the Library’s organizational structure and the new positions that were created as an outcome of that process.

This view is echoed in the feedback provided by the respondents from the “Other Library Staff” survey group. The Library must continue to adapt to new service models and community interests without the option to regularly add more staff to the liaison librarian complement, taking into consideration current

budget challenges. As a result, functional specialist areas may need to be assigned to the existing liaison librarian group. A move to functional specialists may better align with how library users now access information.

Recommendations:

5a. Continue to monitor and adjust the balance between subject and functional specialists based on input from stakeholders, particularly the liaison librarians through a consultative process.

5b. Develop initiatives to enhance and encourage communication and collaboration across functional specialists and subject liaison librarians.

6. New/Future Services

The literature review suggested that new services are largely emerging in response to a greater liaison librarian role that supports faculty research (e.g., research data management, preservation, grant applications). Several studies astutely noted that librarians cannot continue to add new services without discontinuing some of their current services and duties.

The liaison librarians, User Services staff, and faculty members provided many suggestions for new services. Trends identified in the data collected:

- Better facilitating faculty and department cooperation and integration. Suggestions included: greater involvement in department and course development meetings, greater integration into classes via URCourses, collaborative special projects with departments, working in liaison “teams” rather than as the sole liaison, and more fully developed on-site services.
- More services that support faculty and graduate student research. Suggestions included: more instruction and support for research software, workshops and LibGuides on research-specific topics, and providing opportunities for graduate students to present their work.
- Front-line service changes. Suggestions included: liaison librarian presence at the Help Desk (e.g., librarian “on call”), “roving” liaison librarians, incorporating librarians at fixed or mobile service points, and library “refresher” programs for faculty.
- Carry out systematic /scoping review support for faculty members and other staff (i.e., Nursing).

Recommendations:

6a. In order to move the Liaison Program forward, the engagement of various existing stakeholder groups - including the liaison librarians and User Services staff, and the support of library leadership will be required. To sustain momentum on this issue, the Working Group recommends creating a targeted team or teams composed of diverse stakeholders to identify, plan, and facilitate the implementation of new and future services.

7. Traditional services for reconsideration

One theme that emerged in the literature review is that we can't do it all. New services and directions will necessarily result in the phasing out of some existing services.

Liaison librarians identified several services that should be reconsidered. Some viewed liaison librarian involvement in collection development, given budget limitations and the prevalence of electronic subscription bundles, as a legacy service that has been diminished to the role of an intermediary between the library user and Technical Services, and as such should be discontinued. Others identified faculty council meetings as largely irrelevant and a waste of time, and suggested other communication channels that would potentially be a more effective use of their time. Finally, one-shot instruction sessions (i.e., instruction not embedded in the curriculum) is perceived to be a poor use of a librarian's time that does not meet student needs.

The "Other Library Staff" survey group identified a variety of issues to be taken into consideration both within the current model and when exploring new services.

Recommendations:

7a. Review data on liaison librarian roles in the area of collections to determine if a rebalancing of this aspect of their role should be considered.

7b. Hold a discussion among liaison librarians about their experiences at faculty council meetings and alternative ways of communication, taking into consideration existing university policies and procedures regarding faculty council composition, to determine future course of action.

7c. Redouble efforts to solicit buy-in from faculty to embed information literacy and instruction into the curriculum, and reconsider our position regarding communications around one-shot instruction sessions.

8. Distinction between librarians and other library staff

There is often confusion in the distinction between liaison librarians and User Services staff, since these are the two groups who interact most directly with library users. The literature review revealed that some libraries are creating teams of liaison librarians and senior support staff to provide a range of services and to make it clear to the library user who to contact for their service needs.

The students surveyed widely and consistently indicated that they were completely unfamiliar with the liaison librarian role, and often to the point where they were not aware of the liaison librarians' presence at all. There was a similar response from one faculty member who indicated they were not aware of the specific responsibilities of liaison librarians versus librarians in general. There is evidence that there is confusion in the faculty as to who our liaison librarians are, and the professional qualifications for librarians.

Recommendations:

8a. Consider making significant changes to address this, including: clearly identified librarians working at the Help Desk alongside User Services staff; changing the "liaison librarian" title to one that is clearer and more intuitive to library users; increasing advertisement and presence of liaison librarian services in ways that communicates who and where liaison librarians are.

9. Title of Liaison Librarian—to keep or not to keep?

Liaison librarian responses to this question were mixed. There is a desire to ensure that, whatever title is used, it clearly describes to library users the nature of the role (i.e., what they do and the services they provide). Several options were put forward for consideration, including dropping “liaison” altogether in favour of “librarian” with a subject or functional specialist designation.

User Services staff think the title is still appropriate, while also expressing a desire that the scope of the liaison role continue to evolve to meet student and faculty needs.

The students surveyed indicated wide unawareness of what a “liaison librarian” might be, although they indicated a general understanding of what a “librarian” is. The liaison librarian title is not intuitively understood by students. The majority of responses from the “Other Library Staff” survey group support a change in title citing the following reasons: current trends identified in the professional literature, and the title of liaison librarian is somewhat vague and can be interpreted in different ways outside of the library environment.

The majority of faculty respondents could name their “liaison librarian”. However, it was not clear whether they understood the meaning of the title.

Recommendations:

9a. Liaison librarians should initiate a discussion on whether to change their title, and put forward a recommendation to the Library Leadership Team to consider.

10. Liaison Librarian Reference Program

Survey responses indicated broad support for increasing opportunities for liaison librarians to engage in face-to-face reference services with library users. There are a number of formats these opportunities could take, as described in the recommendations set out in this report. New opportunities should be seen as optional for liaison librarians, so that librarians are able to customize the array of services they offer to users in their areas of responsibility.

Recommendations:

10a. Liaison Librarians explore options for increasing opportunities for involvement in face-to-face reference service, building on individual initiatives and also investigating potential new programs. The User Services Leadership Team should be consulted and be involved in the development and launch of new programming or initiatives.

10b. Initiate a pilot project to involve liaison librarians in the provision of reference services at the Help Desk. The framework for this pilot project should include mentoring, mutual learning, and collaboration with User Services staff. Liaison librarian participation in this pilot project must be voluntary.

10c. Identify “champions” among liaison librarians for other potential initiatives, whether programs that are already in place that could be expanded or formalized, or new initiatives. Examples may include Pop-Up Library Services programming, on-site library services, and roaming reference services.

Conclusion

A review of the current liaison model is past due. Workload stemming in part from too few librarians is a recurring theme. Greater collaboration within the liaison librarian group and with User Services staff is recommended. Hiring functional specialists is viewed positively. There is a concern that the work of the profession is not understood or valued and this may impact on the future viability of the library and librarians at the U of R. Librarians should be more present in online classes and work more closely with other staff. There is a view that the Library lacks a dignified presence – it doesn't "feel" like a library. The Library Help Desk may not be perceived as a reference point. Users come to the library expecting to get help from librarians and may not realize that perhaps they have never connected with a librarian.

This report sets out the various themes identified using a consultative process and will hopefully spark further discussion and forward movement in exploring new opportunities for the library, liaison librarians, and students and faculty we serve.

Appendices

Appendix A – E-mail soliciting input from CARL/COPPUL Libraries

Colleagues-

The University of Regina Library is currently undertaking an environmental scan to get a sense of how Canadian academic libraries communicate with and serve those on their campuses. This work is intended to provide context as we consider the future of our own structures and practices.

Our review is broad in scope, so we are interested in both liaison programs and also other structures and means by which your librarians interact with their campus community, whether it be through teams, functional specialists, or other configurations.

We would be grateful if you would be willing to share any insights, documents, or contacts relating to the organization and function of such services in your library. Please send this information to Cara Bradley, Liaison Services Coordinator, at cara.bradley@uregina.ca by October 15, 2016, if possible.

We will be happy to share the results of our own investigation with interested libraries, once this work is complete.

Sincere thanks,

Brett Waytuck

University Librarian
Dr. John Archer Library
University of Regina
Regina, Sask.
S4S 0A2
phone: 306-585-4132

<http://www.uregina.ca/library>

Appendix B

Summary of Documentation Received from CARL/COPPUL libraries

Institution: University of Waterloo Library	Document: Advancing Research and Scholarship Final Report 5/18/2012
Current Librarian Roles	Proposed expanded roles
Subject specific librarians with library faculty connections.	<p>The model is still the same but the proposal included the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen relationships with campus administrators, Office of Research, Office of Research Ethics. Promote open access, and be aware of funding agencies, develop skills in bibliometrics to better assist faculty, be familiar with database/bibliographic management and collaborative tools.

Institution: Simon Fraser University Library	Document 1 : Liaison Program Design Team (LPDT) Report and Recommendations July 2015 Document 2 : Liaison Librarian Review: Report and Recommendations September 2011.
Current Liaison Roles	Proposed expanded roles
<p>2011-2015 Had 3 locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The model pulled librarians across disciplines and functional roles. • Librarians spent time at service desk • Library research Instruction 	<p>September 2015 Discipline Focused Librarian Roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and applies disciplinary expertise – literature, methodology, theory, pedagogy, publishing patterns, information management, departmental priorities, new / changing curriculum, knows the nature of

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided general and specialized reference service • Collection development • Expected to participate in library-wide tasks groups and other initiatives as required. 	<p>functional support needs, provides support for grants in coordination with functional librarians/units, communication (both ways), networking/relationship building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs, delivers, and assesses programs and services related to academic disciplines at SFU • Librarian portfolios are cross-campus. Librarians who have subjects based at multiple locations should have some presence at each campus as needed for research support, instruction, and relationship building. • Communicates workload pressures and proposes solutions to supervisor for effective resolution in the short term and in future program planning. • Due to the increased portfolio size being recommended, discipline focused librarians will depend on the librarians in functional roles to take the lead in informing their practice. (i.e. digital humanities, copyright, GIS, data services, pedagogy) <p>RECOMMEND: Remove discipline-focused librarians from reference desks and AskAway. Evidenced based decision and resulting process will be led by the Head, Learning & Instructional Services and the branch heads. Reference librarians (LTLs) may still provide some staffing support to the reference desk/AskAway in future depending on the decision making process/results led by the Head, Learning & Instructional Services.</p> <p>RECOMMEND: The title of the discipline focused librarians be 'Librarian for....' (E.g. Librarian for Life Sciences)</p> <p>RECOMMEND: Internally, the group will be referred to as Departmental Librarians.</p>
---	--

Institution: University of Toronto Libraries`	Document: Report on External Review: University of Toronto Libraries Liaison Librarian Program May 2015
Current Liaison Roles	Proposed expanded roles
<p>Librarians assigned to various university department, divisions, institutes centers and disciplines Because of the long list not all departments are represented. They felt that some specialities like copyright were not included or represented Reason for review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although they had some advantages to the current structure like librarians being able to build strong relationship with their programs and faculty there was also a disadvantage that librarians could not be strong in all aspects e.g. Individuals may not be strong in outreach or collection development or teaching in a classroom. 	<p>Team model paired with a just-in-time model of service delivery. This model pulls together “individuals with the appropriate skills to address a specific challenge or achieve a specific goal.”</p> <p>It is supposed to maximize the strength of the librarians and minimizes their weakness across the system and strengthens relationships and improves internal communication and process.</p> <p>The hybrid model would have</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Established Liaison Approach 2. Team Based Approach 3. Just-in-Time Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a single point of contact faculty can use for all their teaching and research needs. • Have a “hotline” or “Easy Button” for faculty to be triaged to knowledgeable librarians or staff. • Raise the service level standards • Build on collaboration within and externally

Institution: Carlton University Library	Document: Public Services Review Report Presented to all staff. September 7, 2016
Current Liaison Roles	Proposed expanded roles
<p>Main tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection Development • Reference and Research help • Library Instruction 	<p>Move towards a team oriented approach where “liaison duties should be led and coordinated by librarians would work in teams with other library staff, ensure that the needs of individual departments, facilities, and other institutes or offices on campus are met by the library”.</p> <p>This involves grouping or pairing disciplinary experts with functional skills to achieve a goal. The roles may be either disciplinary (subject based) or functional (scholarly communications, research data management etc.)</p> <p>Librarians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as primary contact between academic departments and other campus partners • Participate in Library-wide and University-wide committees • Be responsible for both subject-specific and professional expertise • Attend external department meetings, conferences and talks, as appropriate • Be key players in the research endeavour • Have a general awareness of functional roles such as collection development, copyright, open access, GIS, data (for those who do not have these areas as their primary liaison role) <p>Information Specialists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be responsible for general reference services for students and faculty, including chat services and the Information Hub • Coordinate orientation and training workshops for undergraduate students and promote information literacy • Have subject expertise for specialized disciplines such as law, business, and engineering, as appropriate

The Liaison Librarian Program: Trends and Opportunities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have primary responsibility for maintenance of subject and course guides, in collaboration with Librarians <p>Create a Scholarly Communications Coordinator librarian position</p>
--	---

Institution: Ryerson University	Document: e-mail from Cecile Farnum
Current Liaison Roles	Proposed expanded roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is similar to us, in that they have liaison librarians assigned to departments, and each of these relationships works differently (some really well and some not so well). As with us, many liaison librarians also have additional duties (“functional duties”) on top of their liaison duties and this seems to be evolving with time. - Still has liaison librarians staffing the desk (but only about 2 hours every 2 weeks). They have separate Borrowing and Reference desks, so librarians don’t do Circulation tasks, etc. 	Working on a Review

Institution: Concordia University of Edmonton	Document: e-mail
Current Liaison Roles	Proposed expanded roles
- Embedded Librarian program with the Faculty of Education.	

The Liaison Librarian Program: Trends and Opportunities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faculty liaison representatives on each of Concordia's five faculty councils (Arts, Management, Science, Graduate Studies, Education) - Library Director sits on the General Faculties Council, Deans' Council, IT Steering Group, Online Learning Task Force. - The library has a Communications Team which is responsible for student & faculty outreach, library marketing, and library instruction support. <p>Less formal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library collaborates with Student Life and Learning on student wellness initiatives (free massages, therapy dogs, mental health talks, de-stress event) - Library hosts campus events (Pizza with your Prof, Gallery Exhibition openings, Readings for Creative writing class students and professional writers, International Student cafe) - Library supports annual conferences by providing reception space. 	
---	--

Institution: Queens University	Document: E-mail
Current Liaison Roles	Proposed expanded roles
<p>Faculty-liaison units aligned with each Faculty, an information services team that staffs all the physical service points in the system, several functional divisions specializing in priorities supporting all Faculties, and these groups have a foundational 'service philosophy 'developed last year</p>	<p>In the process of revising their "Organizational Design and Staffing Document"</p>

Appendix C – Summary of the scholarly literature on liaison librarian programs

Literature Review

As part of our background research for the Liaison Librarian Working Group, we conducted a review of recent literature on the role of the liaison librarian. We located and read 27 journal articles and reports; the oldest was published in 2006, but the vast majority were published 2012-2016. Below are some of the major themes to emerge from this literature.

1. **WE'RE NOT ALONE** . . . We are not unique in reviewing the liaison model. The literature review and the informal survey of CARL/COPPUL libraries both revealed that many academic libraries, both in Canada and around the world, are taking stock of their liaison model to ascertain whether it is still the most effect structure for meeting student and faculty needs.
2. **SUBJECT VS. FUNCTIONAL SPECIALISTS** . . . Several studies reports frame the discussion in terms of the shifting balance in the need for traditional subject liaison librarians and what they call “functional specialists” (examples of functional specialists would include data librarians, copyright librarians, scholarly communications librarians, etc). It seems that every library is currently running a hybrid model of both subject liaisons and functional specialists, with the balance slightly different at each institution. Many subject liaison librarians do, in fact, wear both hats—subject liaison but also with established expertise in a functional area for which others can call upon them. For more on this, see Hoodless & Pinfield (2016); Jaguszewski & Williams (2013); Kenney (2014); Kirchner (2009).
3. **SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH** . . . Several studies and reports claimed that, while library support for teaching and learning is strong, less work has been to understand and meet the role that the library could play in supporting campus research. Research Libraries UK (RLUK) published a highly-cited report that investigated the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of researchers. THE RLUK report indicated that librarians could play a much greater role in areas like preservation of research outputs; data management and curation; compliance with funding mandates; data manipulation tools; data mining; preservation of project records; sources of research funding; and metadata schema and discipline/subject standards and practices (Auckland 2012). The report then mapped these to liaison librarian skills/abilities and identified many skills gaps that need to be filled if subject librarians are to meet these needs. For more on this, see also Gabridge (2009); Jaguszewski & Williams (2013); Kenney (2014); Mamtora (2013); Schmidt et al. (2016).
4. **TEAMS** . . . Some libraries have formed teams to meet subject liaison needs, with teams composed of either a group of librarians or librarians aided by senior support staff (e.g. “the social sciences team” that together meets the needs of all departments within social sciences, etc). For more on this, see also Cramer et al. (2012); Kenney (2014).
5. **RE-ENVISIONING OUR WORK** . . . Several of the reports emphasized the importance of discussing, promoting, and in fact organizing our work around university priorities (teaching, research) rather than around what librarians do (collections, reference, library instruction). Franklin (2012) discusses entirely reorganizing a library around the university’s mission.

6. ***WE CAN'T DO IT ALL*** . . . Several articles highlighted the fact that there are lots of new opportunities for librarians to connect with their campus communities, but we can't capitalize on these without letting some of our traditional work go: "While a dynamic, broader and more intensive role for the faculty liaison librarian is emerging, more thinking is needed about the extent of that role and its sustainability. What, for example, are the priorities for the faculty liaison librarian? What traditional activities can and may have to be abandoned? These considerations are necessary not only to guide the librarians but to help define the attributes and skills required for the position and to determine the institutional support it requires" (Rowell & Fairburn 2008). For more on this, see also Williams (2009).

Appendix D—Summary of Liaison Librarian Survey Responses

Q2 - What percentage of your time do you spend working on liaison related activities OVERALL? (e.g., collection development, course/subject-related instruction, e-mail notifications, patron queries, attending department/faculty meetings, etc). If applicable, please provide a “peak period” estimate (e.g., January-March; September-November) and a “non-peak period” estimate (e.g., April-August; December).

Responses varied widely. Peak period responses ranged from 50-90%, with non-peaking ranges from 25-75%. Among those who provided overall estimates, these ranged from “very little” from those with few liaison assignments to 80% for some librarians.

Q3 - What in your view are the core elements of your liaison librarian assignment?

The vast majority of responses included traditional library duties, including information literacy/instruction, reference and consultation services, collections, and outreach/awareness. Other responses appeared only once: project work, program development, assessment, administrative duties, attending faculty council meetings and faculty presentations, development of policy/standards/procedures, and applied research into library operations.

Q4 - List the 5-8 liaison activities that you spend the most time performing and indicate YOUR PERCEPTION of the value of the activity to you position on a scale from one to five, with a five meaning that you perceive it to be highly valuable.

The majority of liaison librarians identified information literacy/instruction, consultations (in person and email), reference, and collection development as activities on which they spend considerable time. Project work, attending faculty council meetings, and notifying faculty of developments in their area were listed less frequently, but by at least two librarians. All other activities (attend presentations in liaison areas, administrative activity, program development, policy/standards/procedures, assessment, applied research into operations, documents in support of the unit, on-site services, online resource management, professional development, support for Thesis Boot Camp, research metrics support for Research Office, NVivo, advocating, stats/data help, and troubleshooting) were only mentioned by single respondents.

Among activities mentioned by more than one liaison librarian, those ranked as lowest value were faculty council meetings and one-off instruction sessions (among those who distinguished between basic instruction and advanced/specialized instruction). The most highly valued activities among those listed by more than one liaison librarian were information literacy/instruction (especially advanced/specialized, in instances where respondents chose to make this distinction), in-person and email consultations, reference, collection development, and project work. Most of the remaining sixteen tasks identified by single respondents were rated quite high in terms of value.

These results indicate that there is a core of traditional services (instruction, collections, reference/consultation) that occupy considerable librarian time and are valued by the librarians. The fact that 16 of the 24 activities listed were only mentioned by single librarians also highlights the diversity in liaison librarian duties and the potential for growth/expansion of the role.

Q5 - Of the liaison services you provide, which 3 do you think have the greatest impact on faculty? If applicable, please comment on any evidence you have of this impact.

The responses to this question aligned quite closely with the responses to the two previous questions. Information literacy/instruction was mentioned by the majority of liaison librarians as having a great impact on faculty, as were individual consultations and specialized reference. Half of the librarians also highlighted collections as having a great impact, and two librarians highlighted each of LibGuide/online resource development and project work. Individual responses were administration activities, program development, one-site services, and NVivo support. Several liaison librarians cited verbal feedback and thank you notes from faculty and referral of colleagues as evidence of this impact.

Q6 - Of the liaison services you provide, which 3 do you think have the greatest impact on students? If applicable, please comment on any evidence you have of this impact.

The responses to this question were nearly identical to the previous question about services of greatest impact of faculty. Information literacy/instruction was mentioned by the majority of liaison librarians as having a great impact on students, as were individual consultations and specialized reference. Nearly half of the librarians also highlighted collections as having a great impact, but noted that current budget restrictions are beginning to mitigate this impact. Two librarians highlighted the impact of LibGuide/online resource development, and a single librarian also mentioned program development and administrative responsibilities.

Q7 - If given the option, what service(s) would you discontinue providing to your liaison area(s), and why? (i.e. don't like doing it, not appreciated, inappropriate for my rank, etc.)

The only activity mentioned by more than one liaison librarian was discontinuing attendance at faculty meetings. Two librarians reported that most content of these meetings is irrelevant to their work and a waste of time, indicating that they would prefer to attend one meeting each year to introduce themselves and the library, or to only attend if there is something directly relevant to the library on the agenda. Single respondents also expressed a desire to discontinue: one-off instruction, replacing it with video tutorials and only giving in-person instruction in classes with unique or very detailed needs; collection management, indicating that budget freezes and large bundle spending have reduced this role to a basic intermediary sending patron requests to Technical Services; on-site reference, to those departments where uptake has not been great (though preserving the service in areas that have been responsive).

Q8 - If given the option, what new services would you like to provide to your liaison area(s)? Would this require additional time and/or resources? Please describe.

Other than more a general expression of a desire to provide more support for faculty research (mentioned by two librarians), all other responses were unique to individual librarians, and grouped in categories below:

Research Support

- More instruction/support for research software (NVivo, Qualtrics)
- Workshops and LibGuides on research-specific topics: research impact, etc
- Development opportunities for grad students to present their work, grad student journal, etc

Dept/Faculty Integration/Cooperation

- Getting more involved in departmental-level meetings where new courses are being developed and potential for impact is greater.
- On-site services with full support of faculty/dept involved, including designed space, subject-specific “chat” service during specific times, develop more asynchronous subject-specific resources
- More time for special project in collaboration with faculties/departments
- Course-integrated library modules in URCourses

Other

- Other instruction topics: Citation, Academic Integrity, evaluating resources, but need to convince faculty to add time for these topics so as not to compromise existing instructional programs/objectives
- More time for conducting research projects, writing.

Q9: What new/additional services would you recommend the library provide to your liaison area(s)? What, if any, additional time and/or resources would be required to implement these new services?

- Working as part of a subject team, not as the sole liaison librarian
- More data services for faculty and grad students
- Chat service directly connecting to subject librarians during “office hours” or to LibGuides or email after hours
- Research data management
- More librarian time for nearly all offerings
- Dedicated atlas collection in journal reading room

Q10: What outreach activities do you engage in with the faculty, and how often?

- Attend Faculty/department meetings (some go to every meetings, which vary in frequency; other go once per year or semester)
- Initiate contact in person, by phone, by email
- Attend Faculty or department presentations and events
- Pop-Up Librarian stand

Q11: How do you coordinate interdisciplinary liaison activities with your liaison librarian colleagues and/or other library colleagues?

- Informally
- More formal if someone outside the Library needs to be included
- This can be difficult because of how independent/isolating liaison work tends to be, and how busy everyone is

Q12: What types of supports would help you to become a better liaison librarian?

- More engagement with professional literature (like the lit review that went out with this survey, journal club, etc)
- Professional development support, especially funding for conference attendance
- Fewer assignments of liaison responsibility per librarian so individuals can devote more time and energy to specific areas
- More efficient software
- Better communication and collaboration, knowledge-sharing, etc.

Q13: What patron groups in your liaison areas of responsibility have you not been able to reach, approach or engage? Why?

- Some Faculties/contacts are not interested; it always depends on one's assignment/roster
- Some student groups are hard to reach, and do not take advantage of programs to foster engagement (though they may seek help in other ways that are not as feasible)
- Undergraduates are the most difficult to engage

Q14: What are the most challenging aspects of liaison librarianship at the U of R? Why?

- To get people engaged and interested (including buy-in from faculty, and partnering rather than service), especially in information literacy
- To get people to value library services and librarians
- Teaching
- Managing time
- Engaging more students throughout their university career, especially at the start

Q15 - Some liaison librarians have expressed an interest in staffing the Library Help Desk. The services currently provided by User Services staff from at Library Help Desk include: Charging/discharging materials, processing renewals, placing recall/hold requests, room and equipment bookings, processing reserves, collecting fines, directional and generalist reference service provision. How do you see this model working, given that we have a single service point where a range of circulation and generalist reference services are currently provided by User Services staff? In your view, what would the potential impact be on the other aspects of librarian service provision (e.g., Pop Up Library Services, on-site librarian services, subject specific reference consultations, etc.)

Some of the liaison librarians indicated that working on the Help Desk would be one added role to the many roles that the liaison librarians are carrying out and the addition of this role will take away time from other specialized activities. Additionally if librarians were to work on the desk there would be a learning curve to master all the activities currently offered at the desk (e.g. circulation and checking out books etc). This is time taken away from librarians should be developing new initiatives, figuring out new ways of communicating with students and increasing their expertise. Regarding the impact to other services there was a suggestion that the Pop-up librarian service should be discontinued or staffed by user services staff. Additionally the on-site librarian service should be evaluated.

On the other hand some librarians felt that having liaison librarians working on the desk for designated hours in a week will give them an opportunity to have more interactions with the students although this will have to be in consultations with the Unions and HR. Librarians would become generalist who can answer any reference question. Suggested models of configuring the Help Desk included:

- Having librarian offices near the reference desk
- Revert to the previous set up of two areas a Reference Desk and a circulation desk.
- Bringing back the reference desk and calling it Research Help Desk
- Librarians manning the “lower desk” of the Help desk only and not doing any circulation duties
- Introducing roving reference service done by librarians and library staff

Q16 - In your view, which of the above services would be appropriate for a librarian to provide from the Library Help Desk?

Respondents indicated that librarians should offer services that fall within the scope of activities appropriate for members of the URFA (academic) staff as indicated in the Collective Agreement and the University of Regina Performance Review Criteria for Librarians and Archivists. Some activities listed included general and in-depth reference, information/digital literacy and research help. Some respondents felt that if a librarian is working on the Help desk they should be able to provide all services offered at the Help Desk instead of just doing reference/research help.

Q17 - What would you see as the potential benefits of librarians working on the help desk to you personally, liaison librarians generally, User Services staff, and library users?

The most benefit identified was the personal contact with students and contact with users in other subject areas. This contact would also give an opportunity for users to receive speciality reference and research help without being referred to the 6th floor. It was also pointed out that there would be a great opportunity to work closely with the user services staff which could result in benefits like

- Mentorship opportunities
- User services staff having more time to develop their own skills
- More collaboration between librarians and User Services staff

Q18 - What do you see as the potential impact to User Services staff of librarians working on the desk?

For those respondents that said there would be positive impact listed that:

- User Services staff would have an opportunity to learn some subject specific resources and information from liaison librarians.
- Liaison Librarians would learn more about other subject disciplines from the User Services staff.
- The sharing of knowledge between liaison librarians and User services would enhance the services provided at the desk.

- Liaison librarians would be right on the spot to answer complicated subject specific questions

On the negative side respondents listed

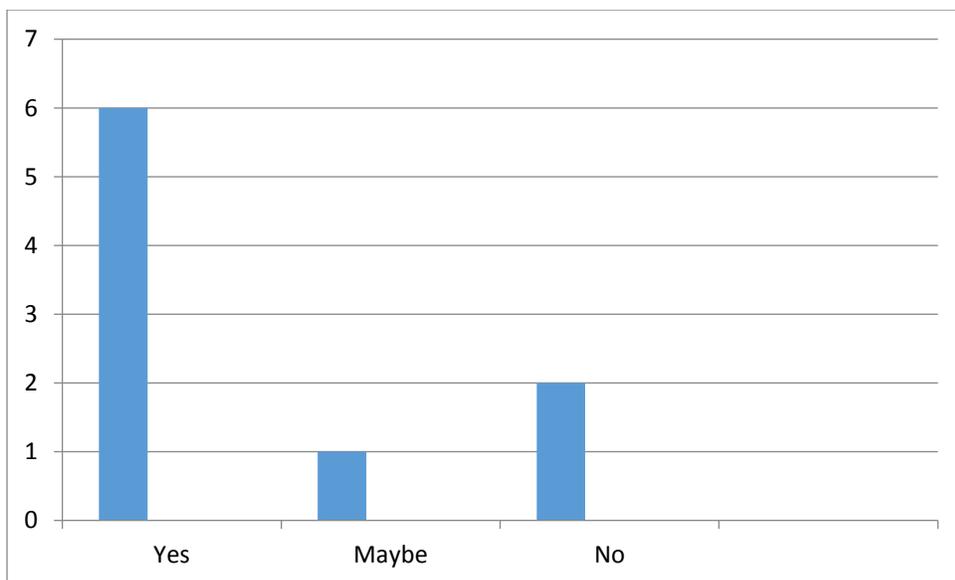
- Low morale among the User services staff due to the reorganization of the unit.
- User services staff may feel intimidated by having a Librarian at the desk.
- Friction among the User Services staff and librarians might develop especially if the liaison librarians are seen to be taking over some of their roles.

Q19 - In the past, there has been concern about potential blurring between URFA and CUPE duties. Given this history, do you see librarians working on the desk posing any problems for URFA bargaining or professional perceptions of librarians? Please elaborate.

Some respondents felt that is librarians working at the Help Desk would diminish the perception of librarians as professionals/faculty as they would start performing clerical duties. Having the same roles in both unions can potentially bring out issues during bargaining.

On the other hand some respondents felt there would be no problems with librarians working on the Help Desk. The perception of librarian roles will be positive as librarians will be visible to users. It was suggested that If the decision is that librarians work on the desk discussion should include both unions and the rationale for the decision should be given so that it is explained that the roles although similar are distinct (e.g. librarians are answering higher level reference/research questions). In addition the letter of assignment and the criteria document could be easily modified to include desk hours as part of assigned duties.

Q20 - Would you be interested in participating in a pilot project to integrate librarians at the Library Help Desk?



Q21 - How many hours per week would you be willing to staff the Library Help Desk? [NOTE: THIS QUESTION ONLY DISPLAYED TO THOSE WHO INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD PARTICIPATE IN A PILOT]

6-8 hours in 2 hour shifts

3-5 hour during peak periods up to 10-12 during non- peak periods

2 hours

½ a day

1 shift a week for 2 hours

4-6 hours

Q22 - Please describe your interactions with User Services staff in carrying out your liaison duties. Is this working from your perspective?

Interactions varied from regularly to not very often. Interaction by some librarians is sometimes dependent on administrative activities or project assignments. Liaison librarians' direct User Services staff to carry out first year library instruction although some liaison librarians feel the quality or content of the instruction should be evaluated. Liaison librarians give the User Services staff information about an assignment in their respective subject areas. Students are referred to Liaison Librarians although students rarely follow up. When it comes to in-depth reference help Liaison Librarians are sometimes considered as the last resort by User services staff. Another area that Liaison Librarians interact with User services staff is for Research guide assistance.

Some Liaison librarians felt that the interaction with user services staff on a long term basis has not been successful due to lack of collegiality between the two groups.

Q23 - Are there ways the current liaison model could better utilize the expertise of User Services staff?

Some Librarians indicted that a closer working relationship between liaison librarians and User services staff could facilitate better communication. User services expertise could be utilized when it comes to course assignment, first year instruction services (one-off and regular scheduled classes) and maintenance of research guides.

More collaboration with User services staff could include librarians being invited to present at User services meetings and liaison librarians inviting User services staff in their IL sessions. User services staff can also be deployed (on a temporal or permanent basis) to areas in the library that may be understaffed.

Q24 - The LIS literature distinguishes between subject liaison librarians and “functional” specialists (areas like copyright, open access, research data management, digitization, etc).

- 7 responses to this question

How do you see the balance of your work now (i.e. liaison librarian, functional specialist)?

- 1 respondent is 100% functional specialist
- 2 respondents primarily functional specialists, with subject liaison to a lesser degree
- 4 respondents primarily subject liaison librarians

Do you think the balance needs to change, either for you specifically or for the liaison librarians overall? How? Why?

- 4 respondents open to rebalancing their specific assignments
- 3 respondents are OK with the balance of their current assignment
- 6 respondents were open to a rebalancing of functional and subject liaison overall

Themes from the responses:

- Could the various aspects of liaison be shared within a team model?
- A strong librarian team should comprise both subject specialists and functional specialists; the balance will always be in a state of flux, with individual assignments adjusted based on emerging need at the U of R and trends in the library profession.
- The traditional liaison librarian model may not be sustainable going forward if vacant positions are not filled due to budget constraints.
- There is a desire to participate in related activities (e.g., Visual Arts and Digital Technologies liaison to be more involved in the digitization of art images).
- Liaison Librarian title not well understood beyond the library; Subject Librarian may be more appropriate/descriptive.
- Over-specialization may result in silos and potential lack of cooperation.
- Functional specialists field referrals and this provides a seamless service for library patrons.

Q25 - When a reference question or instruction request overlaps with that of a “functional” specialist (i.e. copyright, data, archives), do you coordinate with the specialists in these areas? Is that working? Are there areas where we need but do not currently have “functional” expertise?

- 7 respondents. All indicated they coordinate/refer to functional specialists and this is working well.
- 5 respondents identified areas in need of greater functional expertise, including:
 - The new positions identified as part of the revised library structure – Community Innovations librarian, Scholarly Communications Librarian, Research Scholarship Librarian and Student Success Librarian.
 - More than one data librarian to support data dissemination and curation of faculty-produced research data; more expertise in research data management
 - Support for grant applications
 - Instruction/support in use of research software (e.g., Qualtrics, research impact, new and innovative research-based software programs, etc.)
 - Statistics/software consultations or GIS
 - Statistics Canada expertise
 - Scholarly research and open access

Q26 - What aspects of the current liaison model are working well? Are there areas in need of improvement? If so, how might this be addressed?

Areas that were identified as working well in the current liaison model include:

- In-depth consultations
- On-site reference services
- Pop up librarian services for greater visibility and opportunities to connect informally with faculty and students
- Library instruction and information literacy activities
- Outreach initiatives
- Liaisons have developed strong connections with the faculty in their area(s) of subject responsibility
- In-depth knowledge of their subject area(s)

Areas identified as needing improvement:

- Collaboration between liaison librarians

- More support for areas such as:
 - Data
 - Digital scholarship
 - Open access
 - Digital literacy
- While having one individual that is the librarian for specific areas or departments may make it easier to connect with the campus, this model may create gaps as the focus is only on those specific areas.

How this might be addressed:

- More liaison librarians needed
- Move past a strict liaison model with more librarians treated as a team, collaborating with other teams (e.g., User Services, Archives, etc.) and having a mix of both liaison and functional responsibilities
- 1 respondent indicated 'not sure' as people work independently

Q27 - What changes would you like to see in our liaison librarian services over the next five years?

- There is a desire to see liaison librarian services to be more customized to the needs of specific user group – one size does not fit all. This may provide greater flexibility as to the array of responsibilities that are assigned. A team approach may be one way to provide additional subject specific expertise as backup when colleagues are not available to provide assistance.
- There is a view that fewer liaison areas assigned to individuals would foster opportunities for embedded librarianship.
- There is a desire for more functional specialists on the librarian team, either developed from within or through external hires.
- Improved communication among liaison librarians and a better sense of working as a team.
- More time spent on RDM, scholarly publishing, rather than on repetitive introductory library sessions and other 'redundant' activities.
- Opportunities for librarians to do more research to increase credibility in supporting faculty research, and why librarians area members of the URFA (Academic) bargaining unit.
- Change the name (from liaison librarian).

- Explore ways to make librarians more visible to library users.
- Increase the complement of librarians.
- 1 respondent indicated they are quite happy with the current liaison model

Q28 - Do you think that the liaison program has a positive impact on students and faculty? If yes, please share any evidence you have of this impact.

- All 7 respondents stated yes, the program does have a positive impact on students and faculty.

Evidence of impact:

- Various assessment activities the library has engaged in:
 - Focus groups
 - User Services LEAN process review (2013)
- Building instruction into core courses
- Feedback received from individual students and faculty (in person, cards, e-mail)
- Feedback received from faculty regarding their upper year and graduate students; lower year students are providing more academic sources for papers, and fewer sources from Google.
- Positive feedback received on research assistance provided
- Ability to provide services in French and English
- Students are successful and effective in their research and (their) professors report higher levels of information literacy.
- Increase to the number of requests for instruction stemming from faculty who have referred their colleagues to the subject liaison librarian, and see the value of the contributions of the liaison librarian.
- A challenge is how to reach more of the student and faculty population that currently possible; Evidence of this impact is anecdotal, based on conversations, thank you cards and e-mail)
- 1 respondent indicated they expect there has been positive impact but is not aware of them specifically.

Other related feedback:

- Perhaps we should stop using the word program as not everyone may be clear as to what this means.

- Students and faculty get to know their liaison librarian and develop a relationship with that person.
- Ability to develop expertise in their assigned subject area(s) and can develop services and collect resources that support those departments and faculties.

Q29 - Do you think that the liaison program is perceived by students and faculty as having a positive impact on their teaching/learning/research?

The majority of respondents indicated they believe the program is perceived by students and faculty as having a positive impact on their teaching, and learning and research – by those who are aware of it and area taking full advantage of the program (i.e. using liaison librarian services). There is a sense that an increase to the number of functional specialists would benefit library users, taking into consideration questions that are frequently asked regarding open source, copyright, research data and advice on research software as key examples.

Q30 - In your opinion, is the title liaison librarian still appropriate within the U of R context? If not, what other options should be considered?

Five respondents supported to varying degrees continuing with liaison librarian. There is a desire to ensure that whatever title is used, it clearly describes to library users the nature of the role (i.e. what they do and the services they provide). Several recommended dropping 'liaison' and using Librarian with subject designation (e.g., Social Sciences Librarian), Subject Librarian, or Librarian. Given the many hats librarians are wearing, Librarian as a main job title with a list of subject specialties and/or functional specialties beneath that main title.

Q31 - Please feel free to share any additional comments or concerns.

A review of the current liaison model is past due. Workload stemming in part from too few librarians is a recurring theme. Greater collaboration within the liaison librarian group, between librarians and archivists, and with User Services is recommended. Hiring functional specialists is viewed positively. There is a concern that the work of the profession is not understood and/or valued and this may impact on the future viability of the library and librarians at the U of R. Librarians should be more present in online classes and work more closely with other staff. There is a view that the Library lacks a dignified presence – it doesn't feel like a library. The Library Help Desk may not be perceived to be a reference point. Perhaps a separate reference point on one of the upper floors may address this. Noise on the main floor was mentioned, and that it is not an appropriate space for a computer lab. The initiative to extend library hours during exam periods was highlighted. However, it should be recognized that it is only the main floor that is available for extended hours. There is a view that food should not be consumed in the Library. Users come to the library expecting to get help from librarians and may not realize that they perhaps have never connected with a librarian.

Regarding the survey itself, there is a view that it was very difficult to complete – lengthy, requiring too much time to complete, impacting on ability to answer thoughtfully and completely.

Appendix E--User Services Survey Results

1. How often do you interact professionally with liaison librarians? (E.g., refer library users to a librarian, contact a librarian for questions or clarification, teach with a librarian, observe a librarian's teaching, etc.)

Responses ranged from never (1) to seldom (1) to occasionally (3) to frequently (3).

One respondent indicated an interest in observing/participating in instruction by librarians, if they are willing.

2. Please briefly describe your interactions with liaison librarians in carrying out your duties. Is this working from your perspective?

3 respondents indicated that their primary interaction with liaison librarians were checking out room keys to them and/or handing out liaison business cards. 4 described referral to liaison librarians as their primary interaction, and noted that email worked well for this, and that the liaisons were quick to respond and the experience was generally positive.

3. Are there ways the current liaison model could better utilize the expertise of User Services staff?

Generally, there seems to be a sense of disconnect with the liaison librarians and a desire to bridge this gap. User Services staff expressed interested in Liaison Librarians:

- providing User Services with training for more in-depth research
- spending some time on the Help Desk
- better incorporating User Services experience into services
- considering User Services input based on their experience
- modifying LibGuide format so that User Services staff could more easily assist with maintenance
- increasing individual interaction between User Service staff and specific liaison librarians/areas
- regularly communicating pertinent information (i.e. upcoming assignments) to User Services staff
- learning more about skills/expertise of individual User Services staff

4. Please list 3-7 activities/services you perceive to be the most important parts of liaison librarians' jobs.

User Services staff's perceptions of important liaison librarian duties align quite closely with perceptions of the liaison librarians themselves. From most to list frequently mentioned:

- Teach Information literacy/research classes (8)
- Provide in-depth reference/research support (6)
- collections (6)
- outreach/promotion (5)
- regular communication/collaboration with faculty (4)
- Provide guides for incoming research works/assignments (3)
- helping students in their theses and dissertations (2)
- write scholarly articles/be active in professional library network (2)
- referencing, citations and bibliographies
- staff instruction / workshops

5. What liaison activity/service do you think has the greatest impact on faculty?

All of the responses to this question fall under the broad categories of

- communication on topics such as new technology trends in their field, library services and programs, information literacy, critical thinking
- instruction (responses emphasized instruction for faculty as much as instruction for students)
- collections (access to and building of, by faculty)

6. What liaison activity/service do you think has the greatest impact on students?

Responses include instruction in various modes and on various topics (3), research consultations/appointments (3), shaping and providing access to the print/electronic collections (2), LibGuides (1), coordination instruction and resource availability with faculty (1), and developing a personal, supportive relationship with students (1).

7. What liaison activity/service do you think has the greatest impact on User Services staff?

Many answers here came down to communication, including sharing information about upcoming assignments with User Services staff (4), communication Help Desk role/services to faculty/students (2), providing training/skill update opportunities for User Services staff (2).

Others activities include student instruction (3), LibGuides (2), collection development/access (1)

8. Please list up to five activities/services where you understand librarians' roles to overlap with User Services roles.

Reference/research help (9), Instruction (6), creating/editing LibGuides (1), access to collection (1), 3D printing (1), faculty/department relations (1)

9. What new or additional liaison activities/services (not currently being done) would be valuable? Please list up to 5, and indicate to whom the activity/service would be most valuable.

- Liaison librarians on the Help Desk (2)
- Roving reference by liaison librarians (2)
- Creation of online local "information literacy" content (Narrow Topic Tool - University of Nevada, Assignment Calculator - University of Toronto) for all students, but especially distance students
- Enhance Library presence in UR Courses
- Collaboration with faculty/departments (suggestions include: each semester have a collaboration with particular faculty/department that starts and ends in the Archer Library (exhibition/lecture/online Research Guide/online video tutorials), as well as each semester have a Wik-a-Thon with faculty/department)
- Development and distribution of a "refresher" information/instruction on library resource and services for faculty who, because of online resources, don't come to the library as often as they used to and are therefore somewhat out of touch with service/resources

10. Some liaison librarians have expressed an interest in staffing the Library Help Desk. Please list up to 5 potential challenges (for librarians, User Services staff, and/or library users) of having librarians working at the Help Desk.

Most of the responses indicated that challenges would arise in these areas:

- confusion/awkwardness among liaisons/User Services staff about roles/responsibilities (7)
- inconsistent service levels confusing to students (5)
- scheduling (over-staff desk) (2)
- difference between liaison librarians in-depth expertise and wide-ranging questions at the desk
- potential personality clashes (although noted that this already happens at times)

One respondent noted that Liaison Librarians working on the desk might free User Services staff to provide some roving reference service.

11. Please list up to 5 benefits (to librarians, User Services staff, and/or library users) of having librarians working at the Help Desk.

Most frequent responses involved enhanced service to students (i.e. not having to wait for appointment/referral, etc) (6), improved communication/relationships between the User Services Staff and the liaison librarians (3), more opportunities for each group to share expertise with the other (2), librarians more connect to/aware of student needs (2), easier scheduling/staff during peak periods (2).

12. In the past, there has been concern about potential blurring between URFA and CUPE duties. Given this history, do you see librarians working on the desk posing any problems for bargaining or professional perception of librarians and User Services staff? Please elaborate.

2 respondents commented that they didn't know enough about this to comment. 2 more indicated that they didn't foresee a problem, particularly given historical precedent for this, don't see any problem working with the LL at the help desk., and 2 noted that few faculty/staff know the distinction between different library staff anyway.

One respondent anticipated problems for librarians when it comes to bargaining or replacing positions lost to attrition, and one indicated that this arrangement would work if there is respect on both sides, and highlighted the potential to strength the reference/research component of desk services and provide enhanced learning opportunities for User Services staff.

13. The Library and Information Studies literature distinguishes between subject liaison librarians and "functional" librarian specialists (areas like copyright, open access, research data management, digitization, etc). How do you see the balance of Library activities now (i.e. liaison activities/services, functional activities/services)? Do you think the balance needs to change? How? Why?

Reponses to this question were quite varied, with 2 respondents indicating satisfaction with the current balance, 2 indicating a preference for more "functional" specialists (with one of these offering the explanation that this would make it easier to create teams of URFA and CUPE members, and reduce the need for committees), and 1 indicating a preference for more subject specialists to increase student awareness about library services. 2 respondents stressed the need for a balance between the two roles (subject and functional), without providing an opinion on the current balance. Finally, one respondent equated the "functional" specialist with existing department head positions.

14. In your opinion, is the title "liaison librarian" still appropriate within the U of R context? If not, what other options should be considered?

Yes, appropriate (3)

Yes, but (2) . . . the role has and needs to continue to develop. Has expanded beyond original collection development role and should continue to grow and include more focus on students' writing and citing, as well as training/support/mentoring for User Services staff.

Not sure (1)

15. Please feel free to share any additional comments or concerns.

A variety of unrelated responses:

The Liaison Librarian Program: Trends and Opportunities

- Citations/referencing is giving students a hard time i. Perhaps we could assemble all the citation materials, books, guides etc. in one place for easy accessibility by the students.
- There is a need to develop ways how to encourage more students to attend research orientations classes offered by the library.
- User services staff are from sixth floor staff and it is unclear what everyone's role is.
- Would like more communication regarding database updates, links being down, how best to serve students with specific assignments, listing relevant databases.
- Having librarians on the help desk at designated time periods, would benefit students and staff.
- Reference aspect of the desk has diminished and any effort to address that is welcome.

Appendix F--Other Library Staff Survey

There were 5 respondents to this survey.

1. What do you see as the core elements of the liaison librarian role?

All 5 respondents answered this question. The responses were concise. Key themes across the board identified:

- Tailored services
- Relationship building
- Engaging with faculty and students
- Communication
- Collaboration

Summary: Making connections with faculty and students in their assigned liaison area(s). Relationship building is key, developed through strong communication and collaboration.

Key liaison areas/activities identified:

- Collection development
- Specialized reference service provision
- Instruction
- Information literacy
- Research support and collaboration

Summary: The three traditional elements of library liaison were identified: Collection development, reference and instruction.

2. List the 5-8 liaison activities that you understand to be the most important, and indicate YOUR PERCEPTION of the value of the activity to the Library on a scale from one to five, with a five meaning that you perceive it to be highly valuable.

4 of the 5 respondents answered this question. In priority order:

- All 4 listed **instruction** related activities as highly valuable (value ranking of 4 or 5).
- All 4 listed **collections** related activities (e.g., resource awareness) as highly valuable (value ranking of 4 or 5).
- All 4 listed **reference/research services** as highly valuable (value ranking of 4 or 5).

Summary: The top 3 priorities were consistent across the board. Once again, instruction, collections and reference/research service provision.

Other areas of value identified:

- **Communication** (e.g., with faculty about services, feedback from faculty about resources)
- **Building relationships** (e.g., partnering with faculty on research projects, assisting in managing faculty research data)

- **Maintaining in-depth knowledge** of areas of responsibility and a general knowledge on issues such as open access and copyright, etc.
3. Of the liaison activities, which 3 do you think have the greatest impact on faculty? If applicable, please comment on any evidence you have of this impact.

4 of the 5 respondents answered this question.

- Collection development (4 responses)
- Instruction and information literacy (2 responses)
- Reference (1 response)
- Communication (e.g., information on services) (1 response)
- Resource awareness activity (1 response)
- Relationship building (1 response)
- Partnering with faculty in the research process (1 response)

Summary: The top responses in this category are collection development and instruction/information literacy strategies.

No evidence of this impact was given.

4. Of the liaison activities, which 3 do you think have the greatest impact on students? If applicable, please comment on any evidence you have of this impact.

4 of the 5 respondents answered this question.

- Instruction/Instructional materials/Assignment specific instruction sessions (4 responses)
- Reference (3 responses)
- Subject guides for resources (1 response)
- Collection development (1 response)

Summary: The emphasis is on specialized instruction related activities and reference service provision.

5. What liaison activities do you perceive as having little or no impact, and why?

2 of the 5 respondents answered this question.

- General instruction sessions (1 response)
- Adhering to the way things are being done now. In the current 'change' environment, flexibility in approach is key in order to remain relevant. "They [liaisons] need to be constantly thinking of ways in which to better/more effectively serve the research/information needs of their students/faculty."

6. What liaison activities are not currently occurring that you would like to occur, and why?

None of the 5 respondents answered this question.

7. Some liaison librarians have expressed an interest in staffing the Library Help Desk. The services currently provided by User Services staff from [at] Library Help Desk include: Charging/discharging materials, processing renewals, placing recall/hold requests, room and equipment bookings, processing reserves, collecting fines, directional and generalist reference service provision. In brief, please provide your opinion of the possibility of liaison librarians working the Library Help Desk, including the appropriateness of liaison librarians taking on this activity, impact on other library staff who work at the Help Desk, and potential benefits/risks to librarians, User Services Staff, and library users.

All 5 respondents answered this question. All 5 indicated it would not in their view be appropriate for a liaison librarian to carry out the functions identified above – specifically those functions that would fall within the scope of circulation/access services. There was support for librarians to explore other ways to have a physical presence in connecting with students and faculty. Options given included:

- If providing reference services at the Help Desk, this must not negatively impact on the services currently provided by the LUSAs.
- Revisit roving reference.
- Librarian ‘on call’ – perhaps in the User Services area.
- Referral system in combination with office hours a better use of the liaisons’ time.
- Innovative proposal for incorporating librarians at fixed or mobile service points.

Benefits to exploring ways to connect with library users:

- Desire to develop a better understanding of our potentially hidden user communities.
- How best to develop and promote services for faculty, students and researchers.

Risks:

- In the current model, specialized reference will happen less and less; library users won’t know about these services.
- Conversely, User Services staff may become more aware of specialized resources and will render liaisons redundant to a certain degree.
- In order to effectively carry out the full range of Library Help Desk functions, training and regularly staffing the desk is required. Are liaisons prepared to staff the desk on a regular basis?
- Not a good/appropriate user of liaison librarian time.

8. The Library and Information Studies literature distinguishes between subject liaison librarians and “functional” librarian specialists (areas like copyright, open access, research data management, digitization, etc.). How do you see the balance of Library activities now (i.e., liaison activities/services, functional activities/services)? Do you think the balance needs to change? How? Why?

All 5 respondents answered this question

Summary:

- There was a concern expressed regarding the shift to functional specialists and the potential impact on the level of involvement and knowledge at an in-depth level (i.e. subject and research areas). There is the perception that perhaps an in-depth knowledge of collections seems to be a thing of the past; the need for subject specialists will continue, taking into consideration the interdisciplinary nature of the university environment.
 - No fixed or constant measure for this (i.e. the balance between functional and subject liaison); the library is in a constant state of change.
 - Library must continue to adapt to new service models and community interests without the option to add liaisons to the staff complement on a regular basis.
 - Functional specialist areas may need to be assigned to current liaisons; the Library will have to balance functional and liaison roles to ensure the Library is not left behind by the profession or the campus (e.g., not in alignment); there is a fairly good balance now; the structure is flexible enough to accommodate new areas of assignment.
 - A move to functional specialists may align more with how people access information, and taking into consideration new and emerging directions for the library.
9. In your opinion, is the title “liaison librarian” still appropriate within the U of R context? If not, what other options should be considered?

All 5 respondents answered this question.

- 2 of the 5 respondents were in support of continuing with the title liaison librarian (i.e., it conveys the importance of making connections and building relationships)
- 3 of the 5 respondents would support a change in title for the following reasons:
 - Based on current literature and the needs of library users now
 - Liaison librarian is rather vague and can be interpreted in different ways by people outside the library; do library users know what a liaison librarian is/does?
- The following alternatives/options were put forward:
 - More descriptive title similar to functional specialists with functional portfolios
 - Subject Specialist
 - @Archer Librarian

Other considerations:

- As with function librarians, there needs to be a more generalized outline of liaison librarian responsibilities (both internal and external to the library).
- Rather than a liaison team there is a perception that it is a group of people with similar interests acting as independent contractors.
- Do faculty and students have a clear understanding of what the library’s services are?
- Liaison librarians are critical to the library’s continued success and survival.

10. Please feel free to share any additional comments or concerns.

None of the 5 respondents provided additional comments or concerns.

Appendix G – Summary of faculty survey responses

Faculty Responses Survey Results

Q - 1.

Some University of Regina academic librarians are Liaison Librarians, whose role is to engage with specific faculties and departments on campus. Who is the Liaison Librarian for your subject area? (If unknown, please indicate as such.)

Liaison Librarian	Number
Kate Cushon	8
Mary Chipanshi	7
Janice Yule	1
Donna Bowman	3
Michael Shires	2
Marilyn Andrews	1
Gillian	1 not sure
Not sure	2

Q - 2.

Please name up to five areas of responsibility that you understand U of R Liaison Librarians to have.

Although 2 people did not know most of them had an idea about the responsibilities of a liaison librarian.

- Literature searching
- Acquisition of materials/collection development
- Library Instruction (individual and group)
- Teaching Information Literacy
- Copyright experts
- Provide research support to faculty and students
- Reference
- Connect with other liaison librarians
- A person who resolves issues regarding the library e.g. database access
- Research partners
- Should know the curriculum in their area
- Create and maintain Libguides
- Update faculty on University library changes
- Keep up to date with new publications in their subject area of responsibility

Q - 3.

In your experience, what is the most important area of responsibility of U of R Liaison Librarians?

One comment to note is one person said they are “not aware of the specific responsibilities of liaison librarian versus librarians generally”

- Literature searching
- Acquisition and Collection development in subject areas
- Providing support to students and staff
- Liaising with faculty members
- Library orientation
- Teaching Information Literacy

Q- 4. What service or activity would you like to see Liaison Librarians offer that they currently do not?

There were some faculty who felt that things were okay as they are and no more needs to be done. One respondent said that the role of librarians has changed so they are not as crucial since there are internet journals. One felt that the survey should have included a question on quality of service.

Other respondents listed

- There should be a departmental meeting maybe once a year to talk about what's new in the library/resources etc.
- Be notified if there is budget to acquire new resources (e.g. journals)
- Systematic/scoping review support to faculty and staff.
- Support students who are hired as research assistants
- Involvement in curriculum design
- Help graduate students
- Be more helpful in solving issues (e.g. journal access problems)
- More teaching
- Online research
- Be notified of budget availability to order new resources
- Offsite education for students
- Promotion of what services they (liaison librarians) offer
- Group sessions for students.
- Better/more help with spatial data and its availability and applications
- Sample projects on the website

Appendix H – Summary of student survey responses

Student Survey Responses & Summary

83 responses total

1. Have you ever directly contacted a liaison librarian for research help? If yes, please describe the questions you had and the kind of help your received.

- “No” and variations = 50
 - o Variations given more than once included:
 - “not yet” and similar
 - have accessed a librarian’s LibGuide but not the librarian personally
 - o Several respondents mentioned that a prof had encouraged them to reach out to a liaison librarian, but they hadn’t yet.
- Affirmative responses mentioned:
 - o Beginning research from scratch.
 - o Specific databases and resources they were pointed toward.
 - o Taking research to the “next level” for graduate or other advanced studies.
- NOTE: a few responses leave open the possibility that the respondent was actually interacting with a reference assistant (e.g. questions about using the printers, about where to find print books physically).

2. What do you understand liaison librarians’ jobs to be? Please name up to five parts of their job, from your understanding.

- “Don’t know” and variations = 12
- By far the most common answer was variations on “help students (with research and reference/citation).”
 - o “Help students find books” and variations was common.
 - o A significant number of respondents went into detail about the information literacy and research strategy instruction they received from liaison librarians.
- Responses indicating that they were thinking of reference assistants, not liaison librarians = 17
 - o These responses refer to activities like “checking out books,” “at the Help Desk,” “helping with computers/printers,” “helping activate new student id,” etc.
 - o A number of responses included activities done mostly by reference assistants, but also included activities done more often by liaison librarians (collection development, class visits, etc.)

3. In your experience, what is the most important thing a librarian can do for students?

- The overwhelmingly common answer was “help students with research” and variations.
 - o Timeliness was mentioned in a few responses (“especially closer to deadlines”).
 - o “Be accessible” was mentioned several times.
- “Visit classes” was a common response.
- Information literacy skills (“help narrow down search,” “help distinguish between good and bad resources”) were mentioned several times.
- “I don’t know” and variations = 10

4. What would you like librarians to do for students that they currently do not do?

- “n/a” or “I am happy with what is already being done” and variations = 38
- “More visibility” was a very common response.
 - o Visiting more classes, especially 100-level classes, was frequently mentioned.
 - o Posters, presence at the Help Desk, and “just being physically in the school” were mentioned.
- “More availability” was also a very common response. Some details from responses:
 - o Librarians should know what the professor wants from an assignment, and really understand the assignment.
 - o Have a “Hotline” outside of normal business hours.
 - o Have office hours or more appointment times.
- Offering other services was mentioned several times, including:
 - o Writing help
 - o Editing papers
 - o Provide samples of students research/assignments
 - o Offer tutoring, especially for citation

Some notes:

- It’s clear a lot of the respondents aren’t aware that there are liaison librarians, who are different from the people working at the Help Desk:
 - o “I thought the people at the help desk were librarians and were the only people available to help students to find or suggest books.”
 - o “This is the first time I have ever heard of [liaison librarians] in my two years here at the U of R.”
 - o “I’m so used to having to find information on my own, I don’t realize that librarians are here to help us or even how they can help us.”
- The word “help” appears 207 times in the responses.