

Library Liaison: A Philosophy of Service Provision

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This report follows on the recommendations on liaison set out in the *Report of the Library Unit Review Team*, and *The Dr. John Archer Library's Response to the 2006 unit Review of its Operations*.

The Library Unit Review Team's recommendations were:

With regard to enhancing integration with the academic community, the Committee recommends further discussion of the mechanisms for liaison with faculty departments in the context of book selection and collection management activities. (Charrier, Ellis, Lints, & Swanson, 2005; p. 4)

The Committee recommends discussion of the liaison model itself. (Charrier et al.; p. 7)

The Dr. John Archer Library's response was:

Our various attempts to clarify the roles of liaison librarians over the past two years have met with limited success. To address this problem, one of our senior librarians has been assigned the task of researching best practices in this activity and presenting a report to Librarians' Council by the end of the summer. This report will provide the focus for an extensive discussion of the desired model for liaison at our institution. The considerations outlined by the Review Team will form an element of that discussion. (The Dr. John Archer Library's Response, 2006; p. 1)

The purpose of this report is to serve as a starting point for discussion at Librarians' Council on the concept of library liaison.

Background research for this report included a review of the professional literature on current trends in library liaison, and conversations with leaders in the field of liaison librarianship. Discussions with colleagues, faculty and students at the University of Regina helped to place liaison theory into practical terms at the local level. The information presented at the ACRL/CNI/EDUCAUSE Joint Virtual Conference (April 2006) and mesh: Canada's web 2.0 conference (May 2006) heightened my awareness of the endless possibilities for liaison that could be explored.

This report highlights best practices in liaison and sets out recommendations specific to the Archer Library's Academic Liaison Program, and considerations for "next steps" to further develop the library's liaison program overall.

Library Liaison: Then and Now

The concept of library liaison is not new. Its roots go back more than 40 years with the introduction of the subject specialist model across North American academic libraries. This was a transitional period for academic libraries when librarians started to assume greater control and input into the development of library collections, a task that for many years had largely been carried out by the teaching faculty (Latta, 1992).

The primary focus of liaison, or communication between librarians and faculty in the subject specialist model was on collections related issues, with bibliographic instruction and research to a lesser degree. Perhaps it is for this reason that many academic librarians continue to identify primarily with the collections related aspects of their work. This model worked well for many years in the era before the Internet. Traditional library services were geared to providing access to a collection that was housed in the library building. As a result, there was no need for librarians to actively seek out new ways of delivering services to clients beyond the library. Faculty and students came to the library for reference assistance, bibliographic instruction, and to access library resources. There were few other options available to them. In short, they came to us. We didn't have to go to them. It could be argued that the traditional model fostered a passive, rather than a proactive approach to service provision. In this model, librarians were able to interact more often with students and faculty in the library than in today's information environment where a wide variety of information resources and services are accessible to clients via the Internet.

The impact of this new information environment has been a steady decline in the number of faculty and students coming to the library for help with their information needs. A review of ARL statistics indicates a downward trend in in-house reference and initial circulation transactions in academic libraries during the past decade. "Starting in 1996 circulation service transactions began to decline, in 1998 reference transactions began to fall, and in 2000 both categories dropped below 1991 levels for the first time" (Association of Research Libraries, 2004; p. 6). The findings reflected in the ALA statistics are consistent with those reported by western CARL member libraries (see Appendix A). For the period 2001 through 2004, the Archer Library experienced a decrease of 41% in reference transactions, a decrease of 11.31% for initial loans and a decrease of 10.91% in renewals. In contrast, the Archer Library reported an increase of 23.30% in library presentations to groups, or library instruction sessions for the period 1998 through 2004. However, it should be noted that the increased activity reported in this area is primarily due to an increase in general library orientations as opposed to subject specific library instruction sessions.

In my view, the decline in walk-in traffic has created a gap in liaison between librarians, faculty and students that will continue if the traditional collections focused liaison model is adhered to and new ways of connecting with faculty and students are not actively explored. If the faculty and students are not coming to the library with their information needs, where are they going and how are their information needs being met? The LibQUAL+™ findings *Accessing Library Resources through the Library Web Page* (see Appendix B) indicate that a greater percentage of students and faculty access information resources via the library's Web page than coming to the library with their information needs. The LibQUAL+™ survey also revealed that a significantly high percentage of students and faculty use non-library gateways such as Yahoo and Google for their information needs as opposed to the library's "paid for" resources (see Appendix C). This poses both a challenge and an opportunity for librarians to move out of their comfort zone and to creatively apply their skills and knowledge in ways that will reach greater numbers of students and faculty within the context of *their* information environment. "In a setting where access to

information is infinite, the role of the liaison as knowledgeable guide grows in importance" (Latta, 1992; pref. 1).

This is not to say that traditional library programs and services are no longer required. They are. Although the ARL statistics reflect a decrease in reference transactions overall, the questions fielded are often more complex and require more time to answer (Latta, 1992). However, traditional library programs and services, and the staff resources allocated to them need to be rationalized within the broader context of service provision in today's information environment. Librarians, as faculty, should be engaged in the activities that only they can do. These include providing instruction and in-depth, specialized reference services to students and faculty, strategic planning, partnering with faculty in research activities, developing the collection, collaborating with technology colleagues to provide better services, and professional development to bring new ideas forward for potential implementation. To accomplish these things, librarians will need time to experiment with new technologies, collaborate with the teaching faculty to apply new ideas, and have additional training. This will require greater funding for professional development for librarians, providing the opportunity not only to attend library conferences, but workshops and meetings in other related fields such as IT user services conferences, or Educause, which is an IT/Teaching/Learning conference which usually has a library track, for example. With this in mind, is it the most efficient use of a librarians' time to staff a service desk as a generalist for extended periods as opposed to delivering specialized, integrated library services to faculty and students within the faculty or departmental setting, for example?

Library liaison now requires librarians to be proactive and to anticipate client needs, to have an outward focus and a greater awareness of the broader information environment, including trends in information consumer characteristics, trends in research and learning, new information technologies and perceptions of libraries and librarian services (De Rosa, Dempsey, & Wilson, 2004). The recent research that OCLC is conducting in these areas is worth monitoring, as are electronic newsletters such as IwantMedia.com, Iconoculture's Iconowatch Newsletter, and trendwatching.com.

Young Canadians in a Wired World (ERIN Research, 2001) is a noteworthy example of recent research on trends in information consumer characteristics. The focus of the project was on students in Grades 4 to 11, between the ages of 9 and 17. More than 5,000 students were surveyed. The Phase I (2001) findings indicate that of those surveyed, more than 99 % of students have used the Internet and 79 % have access to the Internet from home. "As a homework tool, the Internet was ranked first (44%) among young people as their preferred information source, followed by books from the public library (19%) and books from school (16%)" (ERIN Research, 2001; p.4). The Phase II (2005) findings indicate, "When students are asked how they like to get their information for school assignments, the Net is the clear winner over books from a library" (ERIN Research, 2005; p.5). The survey findings also indicate that 91% of Grade 11 students prefer the Internet as opposed to 9 % who choose the library. Librarians should take note that "despite their preference for the Net, young people recognize the drawbacks of getting information online. When students are asked what Internet-related subjects they would like to learn about in school, the top choice for 68 % is 'How to tell if information you find on the Net is true or not'" (ERIN Research, 2005; p. 5). This is an area that should be given greater attention in library instructional programs.

In addition to the information-seeking behaviours of today's generation of students, there are the expectations of new faculty that librarians must consider. For example, the University of Regina has experienced a significant faculty renewal during the past decade. According to the data compiled for the Fall 2005 Report to Statistics Canada, 275 of the university's faculty complement of 425 were hired since 1995 (K. Fortowsky, personal communication, June 23, 2006). This

information provides a foundation for planning, developing and delivering services that will reach the new generation of faculty and students at point of need. "It has become increasingly difficult to characterize and describe the purpose of using libraries [...] The relationships among the information professional, the user and the content have changed and continue to change" (De Rosa et al., 2005; pref. 2).

Library administration, including all department heads, must endorse the concept of liaison in order to facilitate and support the initiatives of liaison librarians. In 1992, the Association of Research Libraries published the results of its survey on liaison services in ARL member libraries. Latta (1992) found that "...liaisons need 'freedom to work independently with faculty and users...[and their work] needs to be better recognized and rewarded by management for the skill and creativity it requires' (U. Minnesota)....This attitude is reflected generally by the de-emphasis on policies regarding how liaison responsibilities are carried out. What is stressed is what gets accomplished through liaison relations, and how liaison activities impact other responsibilities such as collection development, instruction, and reference services" (pref. p. 2).

It is also critical that the concept of liaison be widely promoted within the library to ensure that all library staff will have a common understanding of what library liaison is, the changing role of librarians in the new information environment, and the impact liaison will have across all staffing levels and on the delivery of traditional library services.

Connecting with Faculty and Students

In the early 1990s, leaders in the profession identified the need for librarians to move beyond the boundaries of the library building, and to place a greater emphasis on developing virtual and in-person services that would reach clients who access library resources via the Internet. In response to declining usage statistics, including reference and circulation transactions and the use of traditional library resources, an increasing number of librarians are actively exploring new ways of delivering services to clients who are no longer coming to the library. "Another way of stating this is that trends indicate a dissonance between the environment and content that libraries provide and the environment and content that information consumers want and use" (De Rosa et al., 2006; pref. vii).

One way to gain a better understanding of client needs is to work within the context of their environment. Librarians and the services they provide are no longer tied to one physical location, and can take full advantage of the Internet and ease of access to library resources from locations across campus. Librarians now have the option to target venues where they will be more visible to their clients and have greater opportunity to interact with them. Early adopters of this model targeted departmental office and computer lab space as prime locations to network with faculty and to carry out the full range of academic liaison activities, including the provision of specialized reference and instructional services, providing consultations with faculty on collection related issues, and identifying opportunities to partner with faculty on research projects, for example. Working "close in" with the faculty also helped librarians to anticipate client needs, and to customize services accordingly.

Targeting the faculty for this type of service initiative is strategic. Ensuring that faculty are up-to-date on library policies and services, and are skilled searchers in the electronic environment will facilitate librarians' work with students in these areas. "*Faculty can be a help or hindrance in our efforts to reach students.* They see the students more often, much more often, than we do. They initiate their students' library assignments. To the extent that faculty are misinformed or uninformed about the library, their students will be misinformed or uninformed; and conversely,

the better the faculty's understanding of the library, its resources and services for themselves, the more likely their students will have that better understanding" (Lipow, 1992; p. 10). The literature indicates that there is growing interest in establishing this type of service model in campus spaces where students gather on a regular basis, including computer labs, residence halls, study halls or commons, career and writing centres, and the student unions (Aamot & Hiller, 2004).

In 2004, ARL conducted a survey of its member libraries that focused on the provision of library services in non-library spaces (Aamot & Hiller, 2004). The findings support trends set out in the professional literature for this service model. The ARL survey provides "...an overview of what types of library services are being offered in institutional non-library spaces, the nature of the spaces, what type of library staff are participating, and how the services are being marketed and funded. The scope of the survey focuses on regularly scheduled library services in non-library spaces and excludes course instruction and traditional library instruction services delivered in departmental classrooms" (Aamot & Hiller, 2004; p. 1). Of the 123 ARL member libraries, 75 libraries, or 61% responded to the survey. The survey findings indicate that 33% of the respondents either have, or are currently providing services in non-library spaces. The concept is not new, with 49% of the libraries providing this type of service for five or more years. The non-library space identified most often was an office or workspace in an academic department. Computer labs and residence halls were cited as the second most popular location. The location of the non-library space is key to the success of this model. Spaces that provide phone, computer and Internet access, are highly visible, convenient, and experience heavy student and faculty traffic are most desirable. Office hours varied, with 46% of respondents reporting less than 4 hours per week, and 29% of respondents reporting more than 10 hours per week. When planning service hours, class and meeting schedules should be taken into consideration. If available, usage statistics for non-departmental spaces may help to identify peak periods and student traffic patterns.

When building this model into a library's service programs, consideration needs to be given to sustainability and the potential impact on client relations if the service is discontinued. According to the ARL survey, the top three reasons for initiating on-site services were individual initiative (80%), a change in the library's service philosophy (65%) and user demand (58%). The survey also indicates that 42% of respondents had either discontinued or suspended the service. Key reasons included lack of appropriate space in the academic department, the questions fielded were not library or research specific, and the librarian who initiated the services either had left the organization or had assumed new job responsibilities. The issue of funding is another consideration. In general, the funding for this type of initiative is shared between the library and the academic or administrative department concerned. The cost to the library is staff time, while the physical space and computer equipment, connectivity, etc., is normally provided by the department (Snowhill, 1996).

The findings of the ARL survey (Aamot & Hiller, 2004) indicate that the majority of librarians had not conducted a formal evaluation of the service. Of the respondents, 20% had not done an evaluation of any kind and 71% indicated that an informal feedback mechanism had been used. In those cases where there had been a structured evaluation, 34% indicated that surveys were the method most often used. I personally found these findings to be somewhat surprising. In my view, assessing these service initiatives is key to determining whether they should be normalized as a part of the library's overall service program as opposed to being considered a liaison related activity only. For example, is there a common understanding across all staff that reference is an activity that also takes place beyond a service desk in the library? Is this view reflected in how service transactions are recorded and reported to outside organizations to ensure that a complete picture of the library's service program is represented?

The ARL survey also identified the academic departments that are most often targeted for on-site services. They are Business, Education, English, Anthropology, History, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Engineering, Geology and Music. The University of Regina offers courses and programs in all of these subject areas.

Marketing and advertising is key to the success of this service model. The ARL survey findings in this area highlight e-mail announcements, fliers and posters, library orientation and instruction sessions, the library Web page, faculty/departmental Web pages, library newsletter and (student) newspapers as effective. The majority of these mechanisms are also available to librarians at the University of Regina. Promoting this service at faculty council, departmental and program area meetings is strongly recommended. "Academic librarians are also constantly on the move to find ways to use the Internet more imaginatively and effectively. We are leading the way on our campuses in experimenting with and exploring social software and a variety of technologies that might be characterized as Web 2.0" (StevenB, 2006; p. 3). Librarians should also consider advertising their services using blogs and personal Web sites, and in networking communities such as MySpace and FaceBook. There are several hundred University of Regina students that have profiles on FaceBook, for example.

Promotional literature should highlight the librarian, as opposed to the library, as the service provider. The popular phrase "*What the library can do for you*" perpetuates the view that the services librarians deliver are available within the context of the library building only. People provide services. A building does not. "For example, in printed matter directed to the faculty, rather than inviting readers to visit the library, invite them to get to know their librarian" (Lipow, 1992; p. 11).

Findings of the OCLC survey *College Students' Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources* indicate that the number one association today's students have of libraries is books. "In a world where the sources of information and the tools of discovery continue to proliferate and increase in relevance to online information consumers, the brand differentiation of the library is still books. The library has not been successful in leveraging its brand to incorporate growing investments in electronic resources and library Web-based services. Can the brand be expanded or updated to be more relevant, to be more than books?" (De Rosa et al., 2006; p. 6-6). Is this also the perception that today's students have of librarians? Perhaps the term *Subject Liaison Librarian* is too limiting, implying that the focus of library liaison activities is on collections and in one subject area as opposed to a range of liaison activities that may be interdisciplinary in nature? Is it the view of students and faculty that the primary role of the librarian is to develop and provide access to traditional library resources only? Providing services in the environments where students and faculty seek information is one way to ensure that client perceptions of *librarian* services are accurate and up-to-date. "Librarians should not assume that faculty know what librarians do. Rather, they should make every effort to interact with faculty in order to build good relationships. As a result, the faculty may become more aware of librarians' skills and abilities" (Ducas & Michaud-Ostryk, 2003; p. 73).

Putting Theory into Practice

The University of Alberta was one of the ARL member libraries to participate in the survey on library services in non-library spaces. The Librarian on-site program was initiated by two Engineering Librarians in response to the consolidation and relocation of the Faculty of Engineering to a new building at a considerable distance from the Cameron Science and Technology Library. The Librarian on-site program was launched as a pilot project from September 2003 through April 2004. The largest non-teaching computer lab in the Faculty of

Engineering was targeted for the project, given its location and high student use. Undergraduate students were identified as the primary target group for the service. Providing this service in a departmental space "gives them [the students] confidence that academic support is always within easy reach should they have further need" (Reichardt & Kowalyk, 2004; p. 10). The Engineering Librarians were in the computer lab on average 4 hours per week to meet with students and faculty. Statistics were kept of questions asked and which groups used the service. The Librarian on-site program continues to be offered.

The University of Alberta's Librarian on-site program is a good example of a COPPUL member library liaison initiative. There are similar opportunities here at the University of Regina. Changes to the campus layout stemming from new building construction and the consolidation of faculties and departments may present opportunities to liaise more effectively with teaching faculty that are now in one location. Does the new configuration of facilities on campus facilitate the delivery of library services on site? Is there the potential to deliver services in, for example, The Environmental Research and Response Applications (TERRA) lab, one of Canada's most modern geomatics computer labs with GIS, remote sensing and advanced statistical capabilities? Is there appropriate space in campus computer labs or in the new residences? Are usage statistics being maintained for these facilities that would assist in targeting areas with high visibility and student usage? All of these questions need to be explored in order to identify potential partnerships and venues to deliver services beyond the library. However, depending on a librarians' opportunities for faculty contact and the subject area concerned, this service model may not be necessary or appropriate (Snowhill, 1996).

Initiatives at the University of Regina

There is precedent at the University of Regina for providing services in non-library spaces on campus. For example, in 2002, the Head, Library Access Services and the Associate University Librarian, Emerging Services and in partnership with Computing services, initiated a service for students on the second floor of the Riddell Centre during registration (J. McKenna, personal communication, August 10, 2006). The Library and Computing Services staffed an area across from the photo identification booth where students could have both their library card activated and their printing setup enabled as soon as they acquired their photo identification. This service was popular with students as it ensured they were quickly registered in the library's system, and if there were problems with the barcodes on their cards, they were redirected immediately to staff in Student Affairs to have a replacement card issued. Previously, students had to come to the library after they acquired their card in order to be set up in the library system. There were often problems with the barcode on their card, and students were then sent back to Student Affairs to have the card issue resolved. Staffing a service desk in the Riddell Centre eliminated this inconvenience for the students, and also alleviated lineups at the Archer Library Borrowing Desk at the beginning of Fall Session.

Library student assistants were employed for this project. The student assistants were accessible to their peers, and there was a cost savings to the library as permanent staff were not required. The equipment for the project included a wireless laptop, external keyboard and wand in order to register students using the barcode on their photo identification. Signage and other promotional materials advertised the service. This program was offered in September of 2002 – 2004 and was discontinued with the change Circulation Supervisor, and the view that the difficulties previously experienced with scanning barcodes have been alleviated. Perhaps this decision should be given further thought taking into consideration the added value service this initiative provided for the students, and the opportunity for library staff to deliver services "at point of need".

On-Site Services in the Faculty of Education: A Liaison Opportunity

A more recent liaison initiative is a pilot project to deliver services on-site in the Faculty of Education.

The Faculty of Education has the largest professional program on campus, with more than 1,200 students at the undergraduate level and more than 350 graduate and Ph.D. students. Of the 51 faculty, 29 were hired within the past 6 years (W. Wessel, personal communication, August 17, 2006). Based on recent discussions that I have had with the students and faculty, it appears that their information-seeking patterns are consistent with trends set out in the professional literature. The majority of them do not come to the Archer Library on a regular basis, and the recent LibQUAL+™ survey findings bear this out (see Appendix D).

The Faculty of Education was a leader on campus in providing all faculty with office computers and Internet access by the mid-1990s. By the late 1990s, a significant number of the faculty were choosing to access information at the desktop as opposed to coming to the library where they could also receive specialized reference assistance if necessary. Convenience was a key factor even though the Education/Fine Arts Library was located in the Education Building and in close proximity to the faculty offices. A review of statistics at that time indicated a declining trend in reference transactions in the Education/Fine Arts Library. This was in no way a reflection on the quality of service provided by the reference staff. Education/Fine Arts Library reference staff were known for their strong service ethic and were respected by the faculty. What this did reflect was a change in the information environment around the library, and the need for the librarians to connect with the faculty and students in new ways. The traditional service model was no longer aligned with the information-seeking behaviours of the faculty.

The ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre) database is a good example to illustrate this point. By the late 1990s, several search platforms for the ERIC database were available via the Internet. At that time, many education librarians considered the search capabilities for the Internet accessible versions to be less sophisticated than the search interface for the CD ROM version of the database. As a result, ERIC on CD ROM continued to be promoted to Education faculty and students in instruction sessions, and was accessible to clients in the Education/Fine Arts Library only. Discussions with faculty indicated that an increasing number preferred to access ERIC via the Internet rather than coming to the library to book a time on a computer to access the ERIC CD ROM. Faculty identified the need for a mechanism, either virtual or in person, that would connect them with reference staff if they ran into difficulties when performing database searches from their offices.

The gap between the library's traditional service model and the faculty continued to grow as the number of electronic resources for Education increased, and greater emphasis was placed on integrating new technologies into the curriculum. For example, Saskatchewan Learning promotes the integration of electronic resources into classroom teaching through the Evergreen Curriculum, and has announced that print copies of curriculum guides will be phased out in the near future and will be accessible in electronic format only. The focus on the electronic is having a significant impact on the Faculty of Education's curriculum and instruction program area. In 2002, the Faculty of Education received a grant from Industry Canada to fund the *iTeacherEd Project: Using Technology Wisely in the Classroom*. The project's aim was "to facilitate the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) into key components of the Faculty's undergraduate program and directly into the preinternship [sic] and internship experiences of students" (University of Regina, Faculty of Education, 2004; overview p. 1). The iTeacherEd Project comprises various modules that are accessible to students via the Internet.

Each module presents an overview of a topic and includes a series of tasks that students can work through for practice purposes.

For example, the focus of Preservice Module #2: *Accessing & Authenticating Online Resources* is:

1. What is a search engine?
2. How can I use a search engine to access the information I am looking for?
3. What is a URL?
4. How do I reference electronic sources?
5. What are the criteria used to evaluate a website?
6. What are some examples of good websites?
7. What are some examples of poor websites?
8. What are some websites that I can use to support a unit of teaching?
9. How can I address issues of plagiarism and copyright? (University of Regina, Faculty of Education, 2004; module 2)

Librarians are very familiar with all of these issues and deal with them on a regular basis. However, there is no mention of the assistance librarians can provide to students in these areas. The Archer Library's Web site is not listed as a "recommended" Web site. The library catalogue is not mentioned as a good place to check for information on teaching resources. Education is a subject area that is well represented in the library's collection of electronic resources. There is no mention of any of these. Only the free Internet search engines are included on the list, and Google is near the top. However, there is no mention of Google Scholar. On the issue of copyright, there is no mention of the information set out on the University of Regina's Web site. There is also a section on techniques for students to use when searching the Internet. However, there is no explanation of Boolean search logic, for example. The only reference to "library" in Module 2 is in the section on Authenticating Online Resources. "What criteria should you and your students be using to determine if information that is authentic? Actually this is an issue not only with the Internet but any source of information you access. For instance, when you go to the library you deal with the same issue. However, in the case of a library, often there has been an initial screening process that filter out the resources of questionable authenticity" (University of Regina, Faculty of Education, 2004; module 2). This was the only reference to "library" in the 10 pre-service modules. In Module #5: *Creating a Teacher Page – Web Design & Sample Integration Strategies*, there is a discussion on Distance Education. However, there is no mention of U.READ and the services available to teachers during their practicum experience.

What the iTeacherEd Project documentation *did* provide was a clear picture of the tools that Education students are now expected to use. Developing course blogs as a teaching aid is one example. If this is the environment students are working in, then it would be appropriate for the librarian assigned to that subject area to develop their own blog as another liaison tool.

This is not a criticism of the content that is set out in the iTeacher Ed Project modules. However, it is my opinion that the information is incomplete without mention of library resources and services delivered via the Internet. This signals a gap in awareness of library resources and services that needs to be addressed. According to the OCLC survey *College Students' Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources* on the issue of keeping up-to-date with library resources, "Twenty-six percent of college students indicate they *do not keep up with resources available*. Of total respondents, 22 percent indicate they *do not keep up with resources available at the library*" (De Rosa et al., 2006; p. 2-15). Taking this into consideration, it is increasingly important for librarians to actively promote e-resources and e-services on an ongoing basis as a key component of their liaison activities. The Faculty of Education has

requested that the library provide orientation sessions for new graduate students and faculty early in Fall Session 2006. Electronic resources and services will be highlighted.

Taking all of this into consideration, and with the support of the University Librarian, I approached the Associate Dean, Faculty of Education with a proposal to schedule office hours in the Faculty of Education in order to deliver a wide range of services to students and faculty in their work environment. The proposal was met with enthusiasm. The pilot project will run from September 2006 through April 2007. Services will be widely advertised using a variety of methods in keeping with best practices set out in the literature. Statistics of the various services provided will be maintained and a survey tool will be developed as a mechanism for assessing the service.

Librarians have collaborated with the Faculty of Education on various projects in recent years, including revisions to and expansion of the library modules for the EPS instructional program, developing reference and instructional components for online courses using WebCT, and promoting bibliographic management software. However, I was surprised to learn that there was still a need to clarify the nature of services that a librarian can deliver on-site vis-à-vis the role of the Faculty of Education's Instructional Technologies Coordinator. This highlighted the need for stronger liaison in order to update the faculty on the various services available to them, and the role of librarians in today's information environment.

The Faculty has requested that a significant focus of my liaison activities be directed toward the graduate and Ph.D. students. An office space near the Faculty of Education's Research and Graduate Programs Offices and Canada Research Chairs Office has been targeted for the pilot project. The office is equipped with a desk, phone, computer and Internet access. In order to reach as many students as possible, scheduling will take into consideration those times when graduate and Ph.D. students are most often on campus, and will most likely be a combination of day and evening hours. Total scheduled office time in the faculty will initially be the equivalent of two days per week. Although the office space will serve as a "home base" for on-site services, there will be opportunities to work with students and faculty in other spaces, including the Faculty of Education's computer labs to facilitate small group instruction, for example.

Piloting the Model in the Archer Library

The need to deliver services to students and faculty at point of need also applies to how services are delivered within the context of the library building. For example, the Archer Library's Information Desk is in close proximity to an Information Commons of more than 100 computer workstations. The desk represents a traditional service model, while the commons reflects the environment in which the majority of today's information consumers are working. "Self-service, satisfaction and seamlessness seem to exemplify the expectations of the information consumer in the huge 'infosphere' in which libraries operate" (De Rosa et al, 2006; pref. vii). Is the current reference model seamless, reaching out to the students at their workstations, at point of need? Or, is it the expectation that they will come to the desk for assistance, and, if so, are they doing this? The steady decline in reference transactions reported by the Archer Library over the past 5 years would indicate this is not the case. According to the OCLC *College Students' Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources* survey, "Fifty-four percent of college students do not seek assistance when using library electronic resources" (De Rosa et al, 2006; p. 2-6). Is the Information Desk creating a barrier between the reference staff and library clients? One way to reach out to clients in the Information Commons is to explore virtual reference solutions that would alert reference staff - either at the Information Desk or in their offices - that their assistance is needed. According to the findings of the Young Canadians in a Wired World

surveys, 86% of Canadian high school students use Instant Messaging (IM) daily (51 ERIN Research 2005). Instant Messaging is a potential option for “virtually” connecting reference staff to students and faculty at the desktop. Exploring new ways of delivering services within the library may also provide greater flexibility in how service desks are staffed.

Google Scholar as a Marketing Tool for Library Resources

Working close in with students and faculty gives librarians a better understanding of the information environment in which their clients work. This information can be used to redesign instructional programs and to incorporate new concepts. For example, “...there is widespread high use of general Internet information resources among college students. They regularly use search engines, e-mail and instant messaging to obtain and share information. The library is not the first or only stop for these information seekers. Search engines are the favorite place to begin a search and respondents indicate that Google is the search engine most recently used to begin their searches” (De Rosa et al., 2006; p. 6-3). This presents an opportunity for librarians to explore new ways of linking students with library resources through the use of free Internet search engines. During recent library instruction sessions for undergraduates and graduates, I have made a point of asking students where they go first for information when they begin a research assignment. The students most often begin with a free Internet search engine, even though they are aware that not all information on the Internet is appropriate for research purposes. Google is often the search engine of choice. However, most students do not know what Google Scholar is.

Since Google Scholar’s arrival in 2004, academic libraries have been grappling with the concept of providing access to this free scholarly search engine through their Web sites and catalogues, and whether to incorporate it into their reference and instructional programs. “As library Web sites are the portals to an institution’s scholarly resources, librarians have discussed Google Scholar’s potential for metasearch across a wide array of publication types, including those from their own repositories” (Bowering Mullen, & Hartman, 2006; p. 119).

A full description of what Google Scholar is, its search features and potential benefit to libraries is set out at: <http://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/about.html> . “Google Scholar provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, you can search across many disciplines and sources: peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and articles, from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organizations” (Google, 2005). Google Scholar links users to peer-reviewed open-access materials, and interfaces with RefWorks. Google Scholar also provides a seamless connection for clients to link from Google search results to the local library’s collection of electronic resources. However, libraries need to join the Google Library Links Program in order to provide this service to their clients.

In July 2005, Rutgers University Libraries conducted a sampling of 113 ARL member libraries’ Web sites to determine how widely accepted Google Scholar had become in the year and a half since it was introduced (Bowering Mullen, & Hartman, 2006). At that time, the findings indicated that 24% of academic library Web sites included Google Scholar on their alphabetical lists of indexes and databases, and 14% on their subject lists; 12.5% listed Google Scholar on subject guides; 19.5% listed Google Scholar as a search engine or Internet search tool; 20% included Google Scholar on their instructional guides; and, 27% of libraries included information on Google Scholar in their library newsletters or blogs. Google Scholar provides an opportunity for libraries to have a “virtual” presence within the context of a free Internet search engine, and may be viewed as a promotional tool for library resources in the new information environment. “Our

faculty and students are potential authors of scholarly journal articles and will want to see their publications, in all possible versions, become as widely available to researchers as possible. Highlighting Google Scholar on our Web sites will push access to our own authors' publications as well as increase the research impact of these materials" (Bowering Mullen, & Hartman, 2006; p. 117). Given the recent audit of the Archer Library's Web site, the timing is right for a discussion on the merits of including Google Scholar in the line up of electronic resources.

Communication in the Library

Communication is key to the success of a liaison program. Liaison not only applies to communication with external clients, but within the library also. Effective communication is essential in order to keep librarians and staff up-to-date on departmental priorities and activities, projects, policies, resources and services. Open communication facilitates liaison planning and communication with students and faculty. Liaison librarians serve a dual role as advocates for both the library and the client groups with whom they interact (Tennant, 2001). The communication is two-way. Library communication mechanisms should also facilitate client feedback.

With the implementation of integrated library systems, library departments and staff must interact more often than in the past. All library operations are integrated. The decision making, planning, priorities and activities of each library department impact across all other departments. The formal communication structures that worked in the traditional library setting are no longer effective in today's integrated library environment. The Library Unit Review Team's Report identifies communication within the library as an area that needs to be revisited. "Communication is organic, based on workplace interaction and shared projects. In this regard, we note that the review begins with a call to the practitioners to consider a more open and responsible form of practice" (Charrier et al., 2005; p. 10). Therefore, the historical view that the Library Administration is the key communicator on library-wide issues (i.e., "top down") must change. In today's library environment, communication is a shared responsibility across all library staff, including the department heads, supervisors, project team leaders, and the Subject Liaison Librarians.

All internal communication mechanisms should adopt a more integrated approach. For example, the majority of the Archer Library's e-mail lists reflect the library's departmental, or reporting structure. This arrangement is problematic as there is now greater diversity in librarian assignments. They no longer "fit" neatly into one department or area. In addition, the current view is that all librarians may be called upon to deliver library instruction and/or field reference referrals, depending on their subject expertise. These functions are no longer carried out by Research Services staff alone. All staff on the Research Services e-mail list, with one exception, "report" through that department. However, the information sent out on the Research Services e-mail list may be relevant to the instructional and reference activities of librarians who are not based in Research Services, and who do not staff the Information Desk. As a result, some librarians may inadvertently be left out of the information loop.

Another issue to consider is the time delay between the approval of meeting minutes and when they are made accessible to all library staff. The Librarians' Council Terms of Reference (see Appendix E) state, "The Council is advisory to the University Librarian. It provides a forum for the discussion of library issues and policies such as budget and staffing. It considers and makes recommendations to the University Librarian. It considers future directions of library service and operations. It receives reports from Standing and Ad Hoc Committees." Therefore, issues discussed at Librarians' Council are of potential interest to all library staff.

Librarians' Council normally meets on a monthly basis, with the exception of July and August when the council does not meet unless a special meeting is called. Draft minutes of Librarians' Council meetings are approved at the following meeting. The approved minutes are forwarded to the Library Administrative Office to be placed on file. The Library Administrative Secretary forwards a copy of the minutes to another member of the staff to set out the minutes on the Staff Zone Web site. From start to finish, the process of making the minutes of Librarians' Council accessible to all library staff may take up to two months. Normally there is no e-mail announcement to alert library staff that the minutes of meetings have been added to the Staff Zone Web site. The Staff Zone is a good place to archive the minutes of meetings, but should not be considered an effective communication tool. The professional literature emphasizes the need for librarians to be proactive and to seek new ways of getting information to clients at point of need. In this case, library staff are the clients. Is it a realistic expectation that staff will take the initiative to check the Staff Zone on a regular basis for updates? Is there the expectation that library department heads will convey information discussed at Librarians' Council and the Library Executive Committee to staff in their departments? If so, is this done consistently across the board, either through follow up staff meetings or via e-mails? There does not seem to be straightforward mechanism for keeping library staff up-to-date on issues discussed at Librarians' Council, or for facilitating staff input regarding policy and operational issues.

There are other library committees, groups and teams that are working on various projects but do not provide regular updates on their activities to the library staff at large. For example, summaries of issues discussed at the Subject Area Group (SAG) meetings are distributed via e-mail to the members of that group only. Issues stemming from SAG meetings are brought to Librarians' Council for discussion and are included in the minutes of Librarians' Council. Periodic updates on the activities of the Roundtable on Technological Innovation and Services (ROTIS) and the Instruction Policy Planning Committee, for example, would enhance staff awareness of new developments that may impact on library resources and service provision, and would facilitate liaison communications planning. This also applies to the reports of the library representatives to academic faculty council meetings. The reports are not consistently brought to Librarians' Council for information sharing. Given the increasing number of interdisciplinary courses and programs across campus, there needs to be a greater awareness of trends that may impact on library collections and services, and this information should in my opinion be made more freely available to all library staff. Is it necessary for the library representatives to hold off on reporting this type information until there is a formal meeting of Librarian's Council? Or, could an e-mail summary be sent to Librarians' Council and/or all library staff immediately following academic faculty council meetings?

A concern specific to liaison is that this communication gap may foster a 'we' vs. 'them' environment between the librarians and library staff. As mentioned earlier in this report, a common understanding of the concept of liaison across all library staff is key to the success of a liaison program. If the library endorses the concept of liaison and librarians are encouraged to seek new ways of delivering services, library staff will need to have a better understanding of the activities librarians are engaged in beyond service provision at the Information Desk. Effective communication within the library will facilitate that understanding.

Communication Beyond the Library

Effective communication strategies and tools are discussed at length in the professional literature. Not all work in every case. A great deal depends on the dynamics of the client group and the entrepreneurial comfort level of the liaison librarian. Terri L. Holtze's 100 Ways to Reach

your Faculty (Holtze, 2002) provides examples of best practices drawn from the literature. Although some of the suggestions may not be appropriate to our environment, the examples illustrate the need for librarians to be both proactive and creative. A "one size fits all" approach does not work. Channels of communication should mesh with the faculty or departmental culture and the personal communication style of the librarian (Wu, Bowman, Gardner, Sewell, & Wilson, 1994).

Survey of Librarians

The professional literature highlights the need to survey both librarians and faculty in order to assess liaison communications and target areas in need of fine-tuning. For example, in 2002 the Working Group on Liaison Relationships at Rutgers University Libraries (Glynn & Wu, 2003) conducted a survey of its librarians to identify changes in library liaison during the past decade that had changed their communication strategies with faculty and students. There were 41 respondents to the survey. The findings indicate that e-mail and in-person contact are viewed to be the most effective methods of communicating with faculty. Respondents indicated that e-mail messages should be brief and free of library jargon. It was also recommended that librarians ask to be added to faculty and departmental e-mail lists in order to keep up-to-date on a department's needs, as well as to inform faculty and students of resources and services at the library.

Traditional communication methods, including library newsletters, campus mail, formal presentations to faculty and communication through departmental secretaries were no longer considered to be effective. Respondents also indicated that an increasing focus on interdisciplinary scholarship had impacted on communication strategies and methods both within the library and beyond. With respect to communication with students in their assigned subject areas, respondents identified library instruction, research workshops, e-mail and in-person contact as the most effective methods.

The survey findings highlight the following as best practices for liaison, thereby facilitating communication with faculty: Know the research interests of the faculty; Show interest in faculty and departmental activities by attending faculty seminars, lectures, and presentations; Train research assistants who work with faculty; Advertise current awareness services; Deliver specialized reference and instructional services; Know what courses and programs are being offered, the reading requirements for undergraduate students, and graduate student theses topics; Review communication strategies annually (Glynn & Wu, 2003).

Another consideration is the focus of messages sent from the library to the university community. For example, the Archer Library's Collection Development Unit (CDU) is proactive in alerting library staff and library faculty representatives to trials of new electronic resources. There is a Subject Liaison Librarian identified as the point person for each trial product in addition to the Head, Collection Development. Information on the trial is also set out on the Archer Library's home page. At the request of the Subject Liaison Librarians, new product trials normally take place during the peak periods of the academic year to provide greater opportunity for faculty feedback.

In the past, the expectation was that the faculty library representatives would forward new trial announcements to all faculty in their subject area(s). Recently, however, CDU has been forwarding announcements to all faculty in a subject area to ensure that everyone gets the same information at the same time. In my opinion, this is a move in the right direction and should be extended to the broader university community. This would provide the opportunity for all faculty, regardless of the department they are affiliated with, to be alerted to trials of resources that may be relevant to their research interests, and to interdisciplinary course and program planning.

This would also update faculty and staff not affiliated with the teaching departments, but who use library resources, to new additions to the collection.

The role of the faculty library representative focuses on collections related communications with the library. Therefore, receiving messages from the library's collections perspective is appropriate. However, consideration should be given to including service related elements into announcements that are sent to the faculty at large. This is a different "target audience". As stated earlier in this report, surveys indicate that the dominant association with libraries is books, and this will continue if the majority of library announcements focus on collections related issues only. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the delivery of library services to the university community. This presents an opportunity for the Subject Liaison Librarian who is the contact person for a particular resource to collaborate with CDU on developing a communications strategy that would actively promote services also. For example, announcements of new trials may highlight unique database search features, online help, compatibility with RefWorks, alert services, on- and off-campus access, viewlet development (e.g., COPPUL Shared Viewlet Database at <https://dspace.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/43050>), and library instructional support. This information may also be of potential interest to reference staff and Subject Liaison Librarians who may be contacted by faculty in their subject areas regarding the resource.

Survey of Faculty

A common theme in the literature on library liaison is the importance of surveying faculty on the effectiveness of liaison programs. A noteworthy example of research in this area is a study that was conducted at the University of Manitoba Libraries in 2000. The purpose of the study was "to supplement this body of literature by examining and evaluating the current collaboration between faculty and librarians and by outlining a new and expanded role for librarians in partnership with the faculty" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 56).

The researchers developed a questionnaire (see Appendixes F and G) that focused on librarian-faculty interaction in five areas, including teaching/instruction, information services, information technology, research and collections. The questionnaire was sent to all 1,400 full-time faculty. There were 734 respondents. Respondents were grouped into three broad subject areas, including the Humanities and Social Sciences, Health Sciences, and the Pure and Applied Sciences. For each of the five focus areas, faculty were asked "...whether they had interacted with librarians in the five areas of investigation (if they had not interacted, what were their reasons; if they had, what was the type of interaction); whether the interaction had an impact on their work or their students' performance (if yes, the type of impact: if not, why not); other ways librarians could contribute; and, the importance of the librarians' role in the university" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 57).

The findings identified areas where librarians could be more proactive in promoting their knowledge and skills. For example, 79% of the respondents did not have any interaction with a librarian with respect to teaching and instruction. Of this group, 28% were not aware that librarians provided this service. Of the respondents who indicated that they had a librarian provide library instruction, only 11% asked a librarian to design and evaluate library assignments. This is an area where librarians could be more proactive in advertising their skills and services.

The following findings are of potential interest to library administrators and department heads when considering an appropriate "mix" of subject areas for liaison assignments. Liaison assignments should comprise complementary subject areas. Assignments that comprise disparate subject areas are not practical (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003). In the past, significant "weight" was given to the collections component of a subject assignment, factoring in size of fund allocations, and whether selection in a subject area was heavily monographic

intensive as opposed to serials based. Now, however, the full spectrum of liaison activities, including outreach, instruction and teaching, in-depth reference consultations, research collaborations, number of students and faculty in a subject grouping, should be taken into consideration. Ducas and Michaud-Oystryk (2003) found that the greatest area of librarian-faculty interaction was information services at 80%, followed by collections at 38%, information technology at 33%, teaching/instruction at 20% and research collaboration at 7%. With respect to interaction by faculty group, the Humanities and Social Sciences have the highest degree of librarian-faculty interaction, followed by the Health Sciences and the Pure and Applied Sciences. For example, in the area of teaching and instruction, twice as many faculty from the Humanities and Social Sciences, as opposed to the Health Sciences, and the Pure and Applied Sciences, ask librarians to provide library instruction or teach a component of their courses. With respect to librarians' impact in teaching and instruction, "...42 percent of the humanities and social sciences faculty and 41 percent of the health sciences faculty rated librarians' teaching as having a substantial or very substantial impact and the pure & applied sciences faculty gave it a combined 24 percent rating" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 67).

In the area of collections, the survey findings indicated that Humanities and Social Sciences faculty interacted most often with librarians on collections related issues, including recommending additions to the collection, journal cancellations, and collections assessments for new course and program proposals. The survey findings also indicated, "although the librarians' background or expertise was not a major factor in the faculty's decision not to request library instruction, the Pure and Applied Sciences faculty were more than twice as likely to consider that librarians had insufficient ability or expertise" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 58). This information is of potential value to library administrators and department heads in determining whether a librarian with an academic background in the same subject area(s) as their assignment is necessary to facilitate librarian-faculty liaison activities.

With respect to information services, the survey also revealed that 12% of faculty respondents did not ask a librarian for assistance, and of that group 58% felt they did not require assistance. Twenty-one percent of respondents indicated they rarely go to the library. This is in keeping with recent library usage statistics reported by other western COPPUL member libraries. With respect to information technology, 67% of the respondents indicated they did not request assistance from librarians in this area. "The two most frequently cited reasons were that they did not require assistance or were unaware that librarians provided it" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 62).

On the issue of faculty perceptions on expanded roles for librarians, "in the area of teaching/instruction, the highest response was for assisting faculty with their information retrieval skills so that they could better teach students (48%). This was followed by 44 percent who wanted librarians to help integrate technology into the curriculum and then by 30 percent who wanted librarians to assist with interactive instruction" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 70). Having librarians teach a full course on information literacy was selected by only 17 percent of the faculty. In addition, librarians must be more proactive in order to establish the importance of information literacy. Other recommendations included, "...develop Internet-based delivery of course and lecture notes, integrate reference software with the library system, and teach faculty how to use multimedia software more appropriately" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 71).

At the University of Regina, there have been several collaborations between librarians and faculty beyond traditional bibliographic instructions. However, this has not been consistent across all subject areas. Therefore, faculty may not be aware of librarians' specialized skills in this area. For example, librarians have collaborated with faculty in developing reference and instructional tools for courses delivered via WebCT. Collaborating with faculty in delivering instructional services to students at a distance is a core activity for the Distance Education Librarian.

The professional literature also promotes the concept of librarians either teaching, or co-teaching subject bibliography courses. This is not new to the profession. Librarians in law and medical libraries have been doing this for many years. However, the proliferation of resources that are delivered electronically has opened the door for librarians to collaborate more fully with faculty in designing and teaching bibliography courses in other subject areas. "Today, when lifelong learning is necessary for all professions, it is essential that students know where to find information, look at a wide range of sources, and, most important, evaluate the information sources they have found" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 67). The teaching of these skills complements the teaching of the subject content. At the University of Regina, for example, a librarian will co-teach the graduate music bibliography course during Fall Session 2006. If this initiative is successful, there is the potential for the librarian to apply to be accredited with Graduate Studies in order to be included on the course listing, and to assist with the course grading.

Ducas and Michaud-Oystryk (2003) state, "Another concern is the fact that the faculty in the Pure and Applied Sciences consistently reported less interaction with librarians....Librarians working in the field of the Pure and Applied Sciences should investigate the faculty's attitudes further and determine whether it would be beneficial to make greater efforts to engage the scientists and how they can best promote their expertise to them" (p. 73). In contrast, I believe that the faculty environment at the University of Regina is more open to partnering with librarians in new ways. This view has been reinforced many times in my conversations with faculty across various subject areas and with colleagues in the library. For example, during a recent conversation the Dean, Faculty of Sciences emphasized the need for greater information literacy skill development among students. The Dean raised the concept of collaborating with librarians to develop an overarching information literacy program targeting upper undergraduate honours students through to the Masters and Ph.D. levels. Right now, the Math and Biology Departments are developing research methods courses specific to students in these areas only. The Dean also encouraged librarians to participate in new student and faculty orientations as an opportunity to interact with students and faculty, and to promote librarian services. There has been a significant faculty renewal in Science since 2000, with approximately 50% of the faculty hired since then. The Dean highlighted the monthly *Faculty of Science Newsletter*, and the *Faculty of Science Annual Report* as an important sources of information on new directions in the Faculty, including student and faculty demographics, faculty research activities, grants and Research Chairs, and the Faculty's Strategic Plan through 2010. The Dean is open to including the library on the mailing list to receive this information, which is also set out on the Faculty of Science Web site at www.uregina.ca/science/ .

Research

Positioning the library early on in the research process requires a multifaceted liaison approach, including regular contact with researchers, an understanding of the research grant process and granting institutions, and communication with the VP Research and International and the Office of Research Services, for example. The library's liaison program needs to be fully functional in order to facilitate information sharing and liaison influences at all levels. If it is, the library becomes a unique information resource with its liaison network that extends across academic and administrative departments on campus.

As an 'intelligence gathering system', the library has the potential to be a valuable resource for the university's senior administration. There is a need to establish an effective communication structure as a component of the liaison program in order for the University Librarian to know what is going on in the academic departments, especially in the area of faculty research initiatives. Through increased liaison with academic departments, librarians may become aware

of faculty research interests that are percolating long before grant applications are submitted. This information needs to be brought back to the library's "information hopper" in order to facilitate liaison at the administrative level. The University Librarian needs to be aware of this information in order to effectively liaise with the VP Research and International, for example. Advance notice of faculty research interests and trends across departments may assist with VP Research and International planning activities. The goal is for the library to be helpful and to inform. With knowledge comes credibility, and with credibility comes authority.

Stronger liaison with the VP Research and International Office is critical. At present, there is no formal mechanism to give the library a heads up on individual faculty research grant proposals. Depending on the academic department, the Dean and Associate Dean, Research may consider research grant proposals that are "in the works" to be confidential. This is problematic as the library is not able to plan in order to anticipate faculty research needs. Another challenge for the library is the impact of interdisciplinary research initiatives (e.g., Health Research) that cut across several subject areas. At present, research grant applications (e.g., SSHRCC, NSERC, CIHR, etc.) are forwarded from the academic departments directly to the Office of Research Services and, if approved, are signed off on by the VP Research and International. Approved grant proposals are reported to the Board of Governors and are included in the minutes of those meetings. The Office of Research Services is open to including the Archer Library on the mailing list to receive copies of the reports on approved grant proposals that are submitted to the Board of Governors. Proposals that were not approved are not reported and remain confidential.

There are several granting agencies that faculty may apply to for funding assistance. Grants are normally peer reviewed in a competition, money is allocated up front, and the faculty member is encouraged to publish in order to advance knowledge in their field. However, faculty may not be aware of the indirect costs of research to the library. Many granting agencies do not allow research funds to be allocated toward the purchase of library materials or services such as Interlibrary Loans, for example. The expectation is that the library at the faculty member's institution will cover all research related costs. There is also the contracting out of faculty expertise to external organizations and the impact this has on library collections and services. In a recent conversation with the Manager, Office of Research Services, I discovered that forty-five contracts have been approved by that office since January 2006. In this case, there are often issues of intellectual property and public information limitations (e.g., who owns the research, privileged information, etc.) that require the research to be confidential. However, this is not the case in every instance. Contracts that are not confidential are reported to the Board of Governors and are included in the minutes of those meetings also.

The lack of formal structures to alert the library early on to research and sabbatical proposals emphasizes the need for a liaison program that is fully operational. Liaison librarians play an important role in keeping the library up-to-date on faculty research activities and initiatives. Librarians also need to be proactive in promoting their skills and the potential to collaborate with faculty on research initiatives. Ducas and Michaud-Oystryk (2003) found that only 7% of faculty respondents in their study indicated that they had collaborated with a librarian on a research project. Of that group, 51 % felt that the librarian had either had a "substantial" or "very substantial" positive impact. The most frequently reported collaboration was performing literature searches (65%), gathering data (26%) and working as a research partner on a project (22%). The responses were very low for co-writing a research proposal, creating databases, analyzing data and publishing the results. Of the 684 respondents (93%) who did not collaborate with a librarian, more than half indicated they had not thought of doing so. "Based on these results, it would seem that faculty do not have strong objections to engaging in collaborative research with librarians but are not conditioned to thinking about it. Therefore, librarians should seize the opportunity to approach the faculty and explore the possibilities of research partnerships" (Ducas & Michaud-Oystryk, 2003; p. 63). There is precedent at the

University of Regina for librarians to collaborate with faculty on research initiatives. However, this should be promoted as a component of the Archer Library's Academic Liaison Program in order to bridge the information gap between the library and faculty research initiatives and grant submissions.

During the past year, the library has made some headway in establishing liaison contacts in the area of research. For example, there is library representation at meetings of the Directors of Research Centres and Institutes, and on the President's Research Committee. Applications for CFI funding and the Canada Research Chairs are reviewed by the President's Research Committee as there is competition across academic departments for access to these funds. This is one opportunity for library input, but it comes toward the end of the process. The President's Research Committee also provides input on faculty sabbatical proposals. All proposals are considered to be confidential in nature. Once again, depending on the academic department, the Dean and Associate Dean Research may, or may not, be open to sharing this information with the University Librarian and the Subject Liaison Librarian(s) for their subject areas. In my opinion, given the confidential nature of the President's Research Committee meetings, consideration should be given to either the University Librarian or the Head, Collection Development attending as the library representative in order to be alerted to research grant and sabbatical leave proposals, and the potential impact on library resources. The library's collection budget has received infusions of money stemming from CFI applications and the Indirect Costs Program. Funds received have often been directed toward the acquisition of electronic resources.

During the past year, the University Librarian and the Associate University Librarian, Research met with the new Associate VP Research, several of the Associate Deans, Research and the Directors of Research Centres and Institutes to actively promote liaison, to explore ways the library could have greater involvement earlier on in the research process, and to promote ways in which librarians can assist with faculty research initiatives.

There are a number of potential liaison opportunities for the library and librarians to promote the importance of involving the library earlier on in the research grant process. For example, this issue could be presented during the new faculty orientations that are coordinated by the VP Academic. Canada Research Chairs candidates are toured around campus during their two-day interview schedule. Is there the possibility of including the library on the tour schedule? Will the candidates for the Director, Teaching Development Centre, meet with a representative from the library as a part of the interview process? Is there library representation at workshops given for faculty on improving their grant proposals? Is the library plugged into research policy setting groups on campus? All of these liaison opportunities should be explored.

The Office of Research Services is another important liaison contact specific to faculty research initiatives and faculty contracts with outside organizations, and may be able to provide information on research trends (e.g., what research has taken place during the past 5 years) to assist with library planning. The Associate VP Research is spearheading a research database development project that will facilitate access to this information. There is the opportunity for library representation on the project group given the expertise librarians have in the area of database management. There is also the opportunity for the library to be added to the Research listserver.

The library should take full advantage of every opportunity to meet with faculty and to promote the various services that librarians can provide in support of faculty research. Further work needs to be done in this area, and the Subject Liaison Librarians will need to play a key role.

Recommendations

The common themes identified in the professional literature for library liaison are set out below. Recommendations are based on these thematic areas. The Archer Library's Academic Liaison Program is only partially implemented. Areas requiring further development are identified. Aspects of the program that have been implemented are also highlighted.

When reviewing library liaison programs, a working group is often established and charged with responsibility for developing recommendations for program development and for facilitating implementation. This process is often linked to strategic planning. Specific to the Archer Library, the concept of library liaison needs to be discussed at Librarians' Council as part of that process. It is my view that unless there is consensus and a liaison philosophy of service provision is adopted by the librarians, further development of the Archer Library's Liaison Program will not be possible.

Liaison working groups normally include representation from reference and instructional services, and collection development. Consideration may be given to expanding the role of the current Academic Liaison Advisory Team to serve as a working group to build on the following recommendations, and to facilitate further development of the liaison program.

1. Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose reflects the library's philosophy on liaison, and sets out the scope, objectives and activities of the library liaison program. The statement should also identify program target groups. For example, "To develop a strong collaborative program between the library and academic units; to develop a collaborative framework to support the library's instructional mission; to provide a conduit for the library to communicate and discuss library issues and concerns with faculty; to develop a proactive stance toward information resources for the larger university community; to participate in and support faculty development efforts with regard to electronic and other information sources" (Mozenter, Sanders, & Welch, 2000; p. 435).

At present, there is no statement of purpose for the Archer Library's Academic Liaison Program as all aspects of the program are not in place. The overview of the Archer Library's Academic Liaison Program that is set out on the library's Website (<http://www.uregina.ca/library/faculty/>) describes services available to faculty only and as such is incomplete if one takes into consideration the wide range of liaison activities discussed in the professional literature.

Recommendation: Develop a statement of purpose that sets out the Archer Library's philosophy on liaison and includes a description of the scope, objectives and activities of the liaison program.

2. Scope of Library Liaison Program Activities

This applies to both the academic and non-academic components of the Archer Library's Liaison Program.

For the academic liaison component, this should include examples of liaison activities related to reference and instructional services, collections, and research collaboration with faculty. Recommended collections related liaison activities for Subject Liaison Librarians were identified as part of the Collection Development Unit implementation. This has not been done for Research Services programs, including reference and instructional services. Recommended instruction

related liaison activities may include "...partnering with academic faculty to develop course-integrated instruction (rather than simple library orientations); creating courses for academic faculty development; customizing classes to specific user needs and types of user; advertising this customization; enabling liaisons to specialize in teaching; using liaisons as conduits for developing students' lifelong learning skills" (Tennant et al., 2001; p. 13).

Identifying the scope of liaison activities with the non-academic university departments is also necessary. Depending on the scope liaison activities required, liaison may extend to library staff beyond the librarian group.

Recommendation: Identify liaison activities that are reference and instruction related in order to present a complete picture of the academic liaison program; and, identify liaison activities for non-academic university departments.

3. Liaison Program Target Groups

The academic departments on campus have been identified and are reflected in the current Subject Liaison Librarian assignments. However, liaison opportunities with the non-academic departments have not been fully explored. Other academic or research groups on campus that fall outside the faculty/departmental structure should also be considered.

This is an area requiring greater attention at the University of Regina taking into consideration recent program initiatives stemming from non-academic departments such as the University-Industry Liaison Office. Without stronger liaison with these departments, the library may not be considered early on in program planning that could impact on collections and services. A recent example is the Dubai Film Academy Program that will be launched early in 2007. This project has implications for the library's electronic resources, and for delivering instruction to students-at-a-distance. Stronger liaison connections with the University Industry Liaison Office would facilitate library input earlier on in the planning process of similar initiatives. Other non-academic departments that may be considered for liaisons include Alumni Relations, the Registrar's Office, and the Office of Research Services, Student Affairs (International Student Success Office, Marketing and Student Recruitment, Student Development Centre), and the Teaching Development Centre, and the various Research Centres and Institutes. The Archer Library already has identified a liaison contact for the Disability Resource Office.

There is no need to identify liaisons for non-academic departments in cases where there is formal representation from the library either as a component of a position description, or formal committee representation. However, liaison at other levels with these departments may enhance communication.

Consideration should also be given to increasing the Archer Library's liaison activities with the Federated College Libraries. To date, the focus of liaison has been related to collection development, technical services and access services, with reference and instructional services to a lesser degree.

Recommendation: Review current academic target groups and explore new ways to configure academic liaison assignments based on research trends across campus and an increase in interdisciplinary courses as programs. Explore potential liaison relationships with non-academic departments.

4. Identify Liaison Program Priorities

Overarching priorities for the liaison program should be identified annually and should be communicated widely. Consideration should be given to identifying program priorities as “essential, preferred, and desired” to place them within the context of individual liaison librarian planning activities (Tennant et al., 2001; p. 9). A good example is the priority list developed by the University of Alberta Libraries’ *Liaison Advisory Team* for 2003 (Appendix H). Highlights included conducting a survey of their liaison librarians to identify current practices, developing a brochure as a promotional tool, and fleshing out their Web site to provide more information on liaison services. Priorities cover a wide range of areas, including communication strategies, information access, collection development, liaison development and program evaluation.

Recommendation: That the Academic Liaison Advisory Team conduct a survey of the Subject Liaison Librarians for feedback on current practices, what has and has not worked, and areas requiring further development. Priorities established should be in keeping with the library’s Strategic Plan.

5. Define Faculty Library Representatives’ Activities

This has been done (see Appendix I). The document *Library Liaison Collection Development* delineates the roles and activities of the Faculty Library Representatives, Subject Liaison Librarians and the Collection Development Unit.

The description of activities normally carried out by Faculty Library Representatives is set out on the library’s Web site at: http://www.uregina.ca/library/faculty/collection/collection_unit.shtml .

Recommendation: The information set out in *Library Liaison Collection Development* was derived from existing library documents that described the activities normally carried out by Faculty Library Representatives, and should therefore be revised taking into consideration new approaches to liaison communication with the faculty. The Library Faculty Representatives model should be assessed when the collection development model is reviewed in 2007.

6. Establish a Library Liaison Advisory Team

This has been done (see Appendix J). The literature indicates that liaison advisory teams are proactive in facilitating library liaison initiatives, establishing program priorities, developing strategies for promoting liaison services, and calling meetings of the liaison forum. The *Committee Mandate Statement* for the University of Alberta’s *Liaison Advisory Team* (see Appendix K) sets out a broad range of activities.

Recommendation: Review the Archer Library’s Academic Liaison Advisory Team’s mandate, focus of activities, and Terms of Reference.

7. Establish a Library Liaison Forum

At present, there is no forum for librarians and library staff to have focused discussions on liaison program planning and priorities, the activities and initiatives of individual librarians, brainstorming possibilities, or following up on ideas stemming from liaison related development sessions. Liaison Forums are identified in the literature as an essential component of a library liaison program. A liaison forum normally meets 2 or 3 times per year, and may be open to all library staff who either provide liaison services, or are interested in learning more about the activities of those involved in the liaison program. Meetings encourage peer-to-peer communication on liaison related issues.

The description of activities for the University of Alberta's *Liaison Discussion Forum* (see Appendix L) reflects current trends.

Recommendation: Establish a liaison forum as a component of the Archer Library's Academic Liaison Program in order to address a perceived gap in communication, and to provide the opportunity for focused discussions on liaison related issues.

8. Communication within the Library and Beyond

This is an area in need of immediate attention and applies to communication within the library, and between the library and its client groups. Formal meeting structures are no longer effective in today's information environment. The library needs to foster an environment where there is a more open sharing of information at all levels, and greater responsibility for communicating assumed by all library staff.

There is also the issue of two-way communication between the library and university departments. The literature identifies several strategies and mechanisms for liaisons to consider for communicating with faculty and students and many of these are discussed earlier in this report. Equally important is the need for liaisons to be proactive in bringing information from their client groups back to the library to facilitate library planning, programs and services.

There are many formal communication structures on campus that facilitate liaison. For example, in 2001, the University's Senate approved a proposal to include representation from the library at faculty council meetings. This provided an opportunity for liaisons to increase their visibility within the faculty environment, and to present information on library policies, programs, services and initiatives. This was also an opportunity for liaisons to identify issues discussed at faculty council meetings that may impact on the library, and to add that information into the library's information hopper. To date, this has not been done on a consistent basis. Librarians are also active on several university committees. Non-confidential information that is discussed at these committees and that may impact on library program planning should be shared more openly and in a timely fashion.

Recommendation: Review the library's internal communications mechanisms and develop guidelines to facilitate information sharing across all library departments, librarians and staff; Develop a communications strategy and guidelines for liaison communications with the university community, including the academic and administrative departments.

9. Promoting the Library Liaison Program

Promoting the liaison program is key to its success. The program should be promoted within the library and to the university community. Promotion of the Academic Liaison Program, including the concept of liaison and the services that librarians can provide, needs to take place at various levels, and using a variety of communication methods, including in-person, print and the electronic. This has been done for the collections component of the Academic Liaison Program.

Recommendation: Develop a plan for marketing and promoting the liaison program, and the concept of liaison both with the library and to the university community.

10. Liaison Development and Training

The professional literature emphasizes the importance of ongoing training and professional development as part of a library liaison program. The Archer Library's Training and Development Program initiative is in keeping with best practices identified in the literature. Several of the seminars, workshops, audio conferences and webcasts that were offered during 2005-2006 were relevant to library liaison development. Key examples are highlighted below.

The Staff Training and Development Program was launched in September 2005 with the all staff seminar *Steering Strategically: Initiating our Strategic Plan*. The guest presenter, Alane Wilson, gave an overview of the 2003 OCLC Environmental Scan and how a greater awareness of information consumer trends could be used to shape library services and programs within the academic library environment. At that seminar, Julie MacKenna presented on the CARL LibQUAL+™ survey initiative, and highlighted various aspects of the LibQUAL+™ survey instrument. The focus of this seminar was in keeping with best practices, highlighting the need for libraries and librarians to have a greater awareness of client perceptions of the library and library services at the local level. Details on the seminar are set out on the Library's Web site at: http://www.uregina.ca/library/about/training/upcoming_training.shtml under Archives.

The *Voyager Access Workshop* was another significant staff training and development initiative. The purpose of this workshop was to train the Collection Development Librarians on how to extract the information they need from the Voyager database in order to generate customized reports for faculty as one of our collections related liaison activities. The presenter for this workshop was Alan Manifold, a noted expert in this area.

The *Path of a Book: Project Under Cover Series* was a noteworthy initiative that highlighted the various activities carried out across library departments. The series underscored the need for a greater awareness of activities and functions carried out across departments in today's integrated library environment.

The Staff Training and Development Program also provided the opportunity for librarians and staff to participate in the various audio conferences and webcasts delivered by the Canadian Library Association (CLA) and the Education Institute (EI). Several of the EI audio conference sessions focused on topics that are applicable to liaison communication including web 2.0, blog development, and RSS. The Staff Training and Development Fund covered all audio conference and webcast registration fees. Information on the Staff Training and Development Program is set out on the Library's Web site at: <http://www.uregina.ca/library/about/training/index.shtml> .

Keeping apprised of new technologies that may enhance liaison relations with clients is key to the success of a liaison program, in addition to entrepreneurial skill development. For librarians with academic liaison assignments, auditing courses in the area(s) of subject responsibility should be encouraged and supported. "Subject specialization by liaisons enhances their competence and improves the quality of their services (collection development, database searching, user training, in-depth reference) and customers' confidence in the liaisons" (Tennant et al., 2001).

Recommendation: That the Staff Training and Development Program initiative continue in some form so as not to lose momentum, and to provide opportunities for further liaison development.

11. Positioning the Liaison Program within the Library's Organizational Structure

The University of Connecticut Libraries' Academic Liaison Program has been noted as a leader in library liaison. Their Academic Liaison Program Web site at <http://www.lib.uconn.edu/using/services/liaison/> is comprehensive, providing an excellent overview of program initiatives and structure. This is one of very few examples of liaison program Web sites that clarify the positioning of the program within the organization's overall structure. Highlights of this site include a description of the program, including librarian contact information, extensive resource guides for each subject area, program plans for collection development and information access for each subject area, liaison working tools, and the evaluation and development of the program.

The University of Connecticut Libraries' Academic Liaison Program is overseen by the Coordinator, Research and Information Services. Positioning liaison 'out front' in what would be the equivalent of the Archer Library's Research Services is indicative of the shift that has taken place in the profession, placing a significant focus on liaison as it relates to reference and instructional service delivery, and outreach to students and faculty. Liaison is no longer driven primarily by collection development related activities. Similar to the University of Regina structure, liaison takes place at various levels. For example, the University of Connecticut Libraries' Collection Development Librarians liaise with faculty on issues specific to the library collection. However, the liaison librarians are considered to be the primary contacts in the library for faculty and students in their assigned subject areas.

At present, the Archer Library's liaison related activities are focused primarily on issues related to the library collection. The Collection Development Unit is also spearheading activities that according to best practices would normally be initiated by reference and instructional services departments. For example, at the time of this report, the Archer Library's Web page does not provide information on the many alert services available to clients. The Collection Development Unit is taking the initiative to develop a Web page that will provide this information.

Recommendation: Develop a plan to foster a shift in organizational thinking regarding liaison, placing greater emphasis on services beyond collections. Explore options regarding the optimal placement of the Archer Library's Liaison Program within the organizational structure in order to facilitate a change in service philosophy.

12. Program Evaluation

The literature emphasizes the need for libraries to survey the faculty in order to assess the effectiveness of a liaison program. The faculty survey conducted by the University of Manitoba Libraries (Ducas & Michaud-Ostryk, 2003) is a noteworthy example. To date, the Archer Library has not initiated a review of the Academic Liaison Program from the perspective of the faculty as a means of identifying areas that require further development. Prior to a survey, faculty should be brought up-to-date on the full range of liaison services available to them in order to keep false positive responses to a minimum (Applegate, 1993).

Recommendation: As part of the Library's strategic planning process, conduct a survey of the faculty to assist in determining the effectiveness of the Archer Library's Academic Liaison Program, and to identify areas in need of further development.

Conclusion

In order to advance the Dr. John Archer Library's Academic Liaison Program, there needs to be a shift in the organization's philosophy of service provision. The traditional service model for reference and instructional services does not provide the flexibility for the Library to redirect its librarian resources toward a liaison model of service provision. The literature indicates a need for libraries and librarians to be proactive, and to explore creative ways of reaching students and faculty within the context of their information environments, both in person and "virtually". The number of students and faculty who come to the library with their information needs is declining. This trend is reflected in the Archer Library's in-house reference and initial circulation transactions that have been reported to CARL during the past decade.

The recent changes to the physical layout of the campus may facilitate liaison between librarians, faculty and students. Opportunities to deliver library services in locations across campus should be actively explored as an extension of the Academic Liaison Program's activities. In addition to liaison with academic departments, there is an increasing need for liaison with the non-academic departments whose recent initiatives potentially impact on library staff, services and collections.

Communication is an essential component of a library liaison program. This is an area that requires immediate attention in the Archer Library. In today's integrated library environment, the responsibility for communication rests with all staff. Open communication facilitates liaison influences at all levels.

In closing, it is my opinion that there are many potential opportunities for the Library and librarians to deliver services to students and faculty in new ways, and that the University of Regina environment is open to this.

The opportunities are out there. Librarians need to be proactive in seeking out the possibilities.

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