



Restructuring Action Plan Results

2010-2013

February 28, 2014

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



INTRODUCTION

The Library's Restructuring Action Plan (RAP) has enabled a continued strong focus on academic communities and information resources, while addressing considerable budget constraint. The RAP was introduced in 2010 following an extensive review process led by a Library Change Steering Group, involving multiple task groups and all staff throughout its development, and an external consultant in later stages. Its overarching goal was to streamline functional operations and restructure the organization, in order to concentrate staff resources on user-centred services aligned with Queen's learning and research environment.

The Library Leadership Team has continually guided the implementation of the RAP recommendations, and has reviewed the landscape and priorities on an annual basis. In 2013, the team noted that the RAP continues to provide a guiding framework in many ways, but given how much has been accomplished since its introduction, and with a new University strategic framework in place, it was agreed that a final RAP results report should be issued.

This report highlights key results under each of the priorities stated in the RAP, and a set of outstanding issues. An inventory indicating the status of each of the RAP's sixty recommendations will continue to be available on the staff website.

The report concludes with a summary of the Library planning process now in place, guided by the University's strategic framework.

RESTRUCTURING ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES

Organizational Structure

The RAP recognized a need to develop a new organizational structure that supports a shared allegiance to common goals. Implementation began immediately and adjustments were made as experience was gained with the new model. The result has been new collaborations that enhance services across the organization. Key elements of the model include:

- Functional divisions with system-wide authority for standardizing or differentiating related tasks and services wherever they may be performed across the system
- Units offering learning and research services closely aligned with each of Queen's faculties and schools
- A framework of working groups and project groups that supports strategic priorities and makes the best use of collective and individual time
- A project management approach to any initiative, ensuring alignment of activities and monitoring of resource commitments across the system
- Communication across the matrix facilitated by mechanisms such as a Library Leadership Team that spans all functions, regular roundtable updates and

meetings of Division and Unit Heads, regular all staff meetings, peer-to-peer information sharing on the staff website and bi-weekly updates from the University Librarian

People

The roles and responsibilities of all staff members have evolved continuously over many decades, as libraries have adapted to and often led changes in information access and preservation. This evolution continues today. At Queen's a combination of technological change and fiscal restraint had resulted in a total staff complement in 2010 that was approximately 24% smaller than it had been a decade earlier, and more reductions were foreseen. Since the introduction of the RAP in 2010, another 11 FTE positions have been eliminated to meet budget targets. The high level of service that students and faculty continue to experience, despite this attrition, would not have been possible without the changes introduced by the RAP, and the dedication and creativity of managers and staff across the system. New approaches include:

- An increased proportion of staff resources devoted to various aspects of the digital library, collections assessment and academic services
- A hybrid of the liaison librarian model and librarian specialist roles, evolving over time and enabling continued strong links with faculties and schools and experimentation in areas where new expertise is required
- A renewed focus on staff training and development with introduction of a Staff Training and Professional Development Specialist and the WHOLE (Wellness, Health, Opportunity, Learning and Engagement) working group

Operations

Prior to the introduction of the RAP, staff time that could be better applied to strategic priorities was devoted to business operations in multiple locations. Operations relating to human resources, finances and facilities have been amalgamated, resulting in:

- Standardization and risk mitigation in all expenses and revenues
- Consistent best practices in student assistant hiring, training, scheduling and exit surveys
- Reassignment of staff to strategic priorities

Information resources

In the realm of information resources, the overarching priorities of the RAP were to develop system-wide policies, procedures and priorities, to systematize and prioritize e-resources, and to improve monograph workflows and the handling of print serials. The impact of changes has been increased efficiency, enabling a reduced staff complement to maintain access to information resources critical for learning and research. Major accomplishments have included:

- Consolidation with a single primary system-wide monograph vendor
- Consolidation with a single subscription agent for mainstream materials
- Consolidated e-resources management infrastructure
- Maximized shelf-ready receipts for monographs
- Centralized ordering and file management and distributed post-ordering tasks
- System-wide mechanisms to support collections assessment activities

Some of the RAP recommendations regarding information resources involved discrete projects, whereas others were guideposts for long-term change and will receive continued attention from the divisions responsible. There will be an ongoing focus on ensuring that processing practices enable the most effective use of staff resources across the entire Library system.

Discovery Systems

The naming of the Discovery Systems division was a deliberate change from the Systems unit and the functional and support teams it superceded: “discovery” emphasizes the user experience as the Division’s *raison d’être* and its responsibilities in understanding research behavior and user preferences. Key accomplishments in this area include:

- Creation of a web development team that engages in best practices web support for teaching, research and information services, across all units
- Assignment of a User Experience Specialist who brings liaison librarian experience in teaching and research services to web development projects
- A discovery layer assessment that identified ways to optimize the use of the Library’s discovery tools
- Implementation of mechanisms for analyzing usage of the Library’s desktop computers and related services
- Collaboration with ITServices, other information technology groups at Queen’s, and the Ontario Council of University Libraries to implement or explore new approaches to various elements of information technology support

Academic communities

In the analysis leading to the RAP, it was recognized that amongst the Library’s most significant strengths are the deep connections with each of Queen’s faculties and schools and very supportive interactions with students and faculty. The RAP made only a few recommendations specific to what is often called ‘public services’, instead focusing on achieving efficiencies in other areas, but the changes introduced were significant and paved the way for initiatives not anticipated in the RAP.

- Services that cross all faculties and schools in their support for teaching, learning and research are together in one administrative group for system-wide leadership, enabling both serendipitous and systematic synergies

- There is now strong alignment with the new Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes, so that Library services and resources are an integral part of cyclical program reviews and are being considered more frequently in new program approvals
- A Teaching and Learning Working Group brings together liaison librarians across the system to share expertise and encourage sustainable teaching and assessment methods aligned directly with curriculum learning outcomes
- Development of an e-research strategic agenda and allocation of staff resources has facilitated the introduction of new research data management services, a renewed focus on scholarly communications services, and new digitization initiatives, including support for emerging University interests in digital humanities
- Queen's Research Data Centre is now under the administration of the Library, in collaboration with the Office of the Vice-Principal Research and IT Services, encouraging increased use of its services across multiple disciplines
- A Copyright Advisory Office was created and its services have been used extensively by Queen's faculty, students and staff
- An e-reserve service was piloted and is now in successful implementation, supporting copyright and accessibility compliance and improving access to course materials in all forms of course delivery (traditional, blended and online)

Library as Place

The RAP recommended development of a library master space plan, and this was timed to align with a campus master plan process. It began in the spring of 2012 and the Library and Archive Master Plan (LAMP) was approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2013. The impact of this project was significant in several ways:

- The consultative process led by the LAMP Steering Group engaged the Queen's community in envisioning the library and archives of the future, and created a strong sense of shared interest
- Aspects of LAMP informed the Campus Master Plan (CMP), and vice versa, so that the Library and the Archives are woven appropriately into the campus fabric
- Board level approval and close alignment with the CMP have provided a high profile for the future of the Library and the Archives, and high expectations; responsibility for 'keeping the LAMP lit' lies not only in the Library and the Archives, but also with Campus Planning, Advancement and governance bodies, particularly the Campus Master Plan Advisory Committee (CMPAC) and Queen's University Planning Council (QUPC)
- The Library and Archives Master Plan provides a framework that will guide the development of Queen's Library and Archives facilities over the next twenty years, and it will inform elements of collections management, service development and organizational structure, and all planning initiatives

One of the RAP recommendations stated "*Continue to achieve minor cost savings by reducing hours and/or staffing levels wherever possible, but also review service points in light of activity levels. The Library Change process needs to consider the more*

fundamental questions of the viability of our current number of physical locations and the nature of the services to be delivered.” The LAMP framework affirms that there will be multiple Library locations placed strategically across campus, but introduces some consolidation as well as new concepts for the configuration of services, collections and learning spaces. With this framework in mind, and in light of continuing budget constraints, it is time to develop new service models that will best meet current and future user needs.

Communications

In support of all priorities, the RAP recommended that the Library should affirm a clear vision in communicating about the change process, with statements that highlight our unique expertise and active engagement with the academic enterprise. The support the Library receives from academic units, and the feedback of individual faculty and students, would suggest positive results in this regard. Several communications-related initiatives are noteworthy:

- Division and Unit Heads participated in a workshop on ‘communicating across the matrix’ and have developed both informal and formal mechanisms to support internal communications and a clear vision (see also *Organizational Structure*, above)
- A Library branding exercise was undertaken with Queen’s Marketing, building on the University’s ‘spirit of initiative’ branding
- Queen’s Communications has actively engaged in delivering and advising on Library messages both within Queen’s and in external media
- The initiative of individual Library staff in maintaining effective relationships with our academic communities is one of the hallmarks of Queen’s

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The overarching result of the RAP implementation is the Library’s ability to deliver the services and resources required for learning and research in the face of dramatic staff reductions. Organizational and operational change is never ‘done,’ however, and the framework and priorities of the RAP will continue to guide the Library for many years to come. In particular, ongoing attention is needed regarding:

- Public services renewal in the form of new service models that address changes in users’ needs, new and evolving staff roles, the impact of technology and financial constraints
- Continuing evolution in the processes of e-resource acquisition, management, access and preservation, areas of concern for many research libraries
- Continuing refinement in the handling of print resources
- Communications support within the Library, to enable strong messaging for advancement purposes and to enhance user experiences in both the physical and digital realm

- A rigorous program of assessment across all functions, building upon and augmenting work under way in the areas of collections and teaching, to ensure the most effective use of financial resources and appropriate support for academic programs and research

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS GOING FORWARD

The University introduced elements of a new strategic framework in 2013, building upon the Academic Plan and the Strategic Research Plan. The *Strategic Framework 2014-2019* envisions Queen's University as the Canadian research-intensive university with a transformative student learning experience. It identifies four strategic drivers – the student learning experience, research prominence, financial sustainability and internationalization – that will guide decision-making to support the success of our balanced academy. As well, the University has a new budget model involving an annual cycle of multi-year planning.

In this new context, the Library Leadership Team sought advice from Heads and concluded that a separate long-range strategic planning process within the Library is not appropriate at this time. The University Strategic Framework guides the Library's strategic priorities, and the annual planning cycle provides a nimble approach that is naturally aligned with Faculty/School priorities through the Provost's Advisory Committee on Budget, which includes all Deans and the leaders of several Shared Services, including the University Librarian.

Critical planning dates in the annual cycle are as follows (see also next page):

- June – budget plan instructions are received and Heads collectively review accomplishments of the past fiscal year, reaffirm priorities of the current year and begin planning priorities for the following year
- July-August – units/divisions discuss draft future priorities
- July – University Librarian reports to the Provost on accomplishments of the past year and confirms priorities of the current year in alignment with Principal's and Provost's goals
- September – submission of multi-year budget plan to the Provost's Advisory Committee on Budget
- September/October – all staff meeting recap of accomplishments and priorities
- January – deadline for librarians' annual reports
- February/March – all staff meeting review of upcoming budget plan
- March – Heads review upcoming year priorities in discussing librarians' annual action plans and in preparation for Heads planning in June
- June – working group reports, unit annual reports and library technician and support staff reviews

**Library Annual
Planning,
Assessment and
Reporting Cycle
(March 2012)**

