



## CHIEF LIBRARIAN'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

### GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

**Recommendation One:** UBCO Provost and UBC University Librarian and other senior leaders consider a solid line reporting structure for the UBCO Chief Librarian within the UBC Library, and a corresponding title change. This could be at either the Deputy University Librarian level, if there were two Deputy positions created -- one for Vancouver and one for Okanagan -- or as an associate university librarian with the UBCO Library as part of their portfolio with other system-wide responsibilities. This five-year renewable academic administrative appointment would be concurrent with and in addition to the Associate Provost role held at UBCO, ensuring accountability and integration with both the UBC Library system management and UBCO's senior leadership team. This will require a review of library administrator roles and the supporting structures to complement and be in alignment with this system-wide role in the UBC Library.

**Response:** UBC Okanagan and its evolving relationship with the Vancouver Campus presents a unique challenge in terms of governance, and a variety of reporting relationships exist between positions on both campuses. I am in full agreement that clarity should be achieved regarding the nature of the reporting relationship between the Chief Librarian at UBC Okanagan and the University Librarian at UBC Vancouver. After consultation, both I and the University Librarian agree that the Chief Librarian should have a *dotted-line reporting relationship to the University Librarian and a solid line reporting relationship to the UBC Okanagan Provost and Vice-President Academic*. This structure best acknowledges the critical campus and regional linkages essential to the success of UBC Okanagan's Chief Librarian while acknowledging the campus' connections to UBC Library at a system level. It also most appropriately represents the true workload of the Chief Librarian role; on a practical level, workload would not allow for a single individual to be responsible for the Okanagan Library, assume (a) system-wide portfolio(s) within UBC Library, and hold a concurrent Associate Provost role on the Okanagan campus.

As observed elsewhere in these comments, we have set a goal to identify and develop collaborations on specific projects and activities. Part of that work will be to make our collaborations and connections more evident.

### PROVISION OF SERVICES

**Recommendation Two:** The current mechanism for including UBCO Library input into new program development be preserved and strengthened to ensure, as new programs are created, that the additional requirements for scholarly resources are considered and adequately funded, in most cases through a transfer of additional funds to the Library's acquisitions budget.



**Response:** Agreed. Considerable work has been done in recent years to embed the Library in the creation of new programs, and link its input to budgetary considerations.

**Recommendation Three:** Consideration should be given for ways to index growth of UBCO Library librarian and staff complement to the growth of student enrolment and faculty size. While many library services are scalable and can be adapted to serve larger numbers of students with the same staffing levels, UBCO is known for high quality, individualized attention to students and faculty, and it would be a loss to the community if Library services cannot be sustained with some personalized elements remaining. Additionally, there is an increasing demand for services to support the research enterprise, digitization, records management, and scholarly communications, all placing demands on a relatively small cadre of library staff.

**Response:** Agreed. The campus is currently crafting a faculty hiring plan; librarians should be included in those considerations. A challenge from this perspective is that a significant proportion of projected growth in the Library will be within the staff complement, demonstrated particularly in demand for staff with specialized skills – for example, in the areas of scholarly writing, data, and digital projects. The specific ways in which librarian and non-librarian work is addressed will take UBC Okanagan and UBC Vancouver libraries' strengths and practices into account. Other libraries' staffing and services will be studied as well, to determine the right mix for UBC Okanagan.

These requirements will not be recognized within the auspices of a faculty hiring plan, and it will be important for me to work closely with the Provost to articulate projected staffing needs.

**Recommendation Four:** Recognizing the time demands on the Vice Provost and Chief Librarian, vacant positions should still be filled as soon as possible.

**Response:** Agreed. There have been two specific hiring delays: one involving a failed competition, and one involving significant change to a vacant position that required analysis of organizational and budgetary impact. I believe there has also been confusion among employees, in some cases, wherein lengthy (paid) personal leaves were incorrectly interpreted as vacancies. In some of these cases, personal privacy prevents full disclosure of the situation. An all-staff discussion on this topic has been held, and I believe there is increased understanding of the challenges the organization has faced.

## **LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

**Recommendation Five:** Intentional and meaningful bi-directional input and consultation in the strategic planning processes for the libraries at each campus is essential for the achievement of their academic missions. Developing structures and shared accountabilities in these areas will support these activities. Focusing on a couple of collaborative initiatives would provide a means to develop best practices for sustainable, mutually beneficial working relationships. This could contribute to increasing the national and international reputation of the libraries and the university.



**Response:** Both I and the University Librarian fully agree on the benefit of more formal planning to identify and pursue collaborative initiatives, and use these as opportunities to enhance working relationships. We believe that the most appropriate approach would be to create a document that discusses areas of shared vision, and defines the nature of the relationship between the two campuses. We plan to consult librarians and staff at both libraries; through this mutual discussion we can ensure that such a document or plan will include a discussion of the responsibilities and accountabilities of each, while respecting the unique cultures of each location and the importance of both parts to the success of the whole.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES**

**Recommendation Six:** Best practices for the protection of acquisitions lines, annual inflationary indexing and mechanisms to protect against currency fluctuations be examined and implemented for the UBCO Library budget. However, any new indexing should be consistent with practices at UBC Vancouver libraries.

**Response:** We work closely with UBC Vancouver Library on best practices in these areas, including purchasing US dollars using preferred rates with the assistance of Treasury. Evidence-based decision making is paramount, and we – in collaboration with Vancouver colleagues – are thoughtful about how to account for exchange rates and inflationary costs when developing the collections budget. Requests for increases to the collections budget are, of course, not guaranteed, but these are given foremost consideration during the budget process and we have found the campus budget committee to be very supportive. We hope and expect this would continue in future.

**Recommendation Seven:** A review of the distribution and sustainability of budgetary allocations to support UBCO Library growth be undertaken by the UBC University Librarian and the UBCO Chief Librarian.

**Response:** Neither I, nor the University Librarian, believe a formal review is necessary at this time; however, we acknowledge that this is an area we must monitor. The two campuses work extremely closely in the area of collections, and have performed significant work to rationalize which campus assumes the cost of individual resources. We have also greatly reduced the need to send money back and forth between the campuses. The valued work of our Collections Librarian (at UBCO) and Associate University Librarian, Collections (and his team, UBCV) cannot be overstated in this regard. Their efforts reflect a fairness and sustainability of distribution that maximizes consultation while minimizing administrative overhead.

## **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Recommendation Eight:** Explore ways to increase participation on UBC Library committees and project initiatives by UBCO librarians and staff, to demonstrate collegiality and to ensure the UBCO perspective is incorporated in planning and decision-making. Conversely, consideration should be



given for ways to encourage participation by UBCV librarians and staff on UBCO-led committees, and with the upcoming Strategic Planning process for the UBCO Library. Ideally, this planning process will include the University Librarian as well.

**Response:** UBC Okanagan librarians are participants on virtually every standing committee, task force, working group, or project initiative that touches both campuses. This represents a significant resource investment as the overall number of librarians on this campus is quite small compared to the number on the Vancouver campus and, consequently, many of our librarians are asked to take on a large number of such assignments. It is certainly the case that UBCO librarians have taken leadership roles on such committees, serving as Chairs or Co-Chairs. While we appreciate the suggestion that “with video-conferencing capabilities, there is no geographic impediment to full participation and leadership emanating from the UBCO Library,” this theory does not necessarily translate seamlessly to reality given the inherent challenges in chairing meetings remotely, and lack of available videoconferencing facilities on the Vancouver campus. I also believe that, in general, some of UBC Library’s existing committees could function more effectively overall. At present, participation in some does not represent a valuable use of our limited capacity. If committee structures or areas of focus change, this will be a further opportunity for engagement.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Recommendation Nine:** In the forthcoming Strategic Planning process for the UBCO Library, a strategy for continued community engagement, and the support of lifelong learning, should be considered in light of existing and anticipated needs.

**Recommendation Ten:** Conducting user research to develop a vision and functional program for the Innovation Library would go a long ways to ground this entity for a vibrant future.

**Response:** Agreed on recommendations. This work will be one of the first project areas for the new Associate Chief Librarian, Engagement & Access, a position which is currently posted, and is anticipated to be undertaken in close collaboration with partners at Okanagan Regional Library.

## OPERATIONS

**Recommendation Eleven:** Work with UBC HR programs to review UCBO Library hiring practices to develop recruitment and retention strategies to increase the percentage of staff who reflect the composition of the student and faculty corps.

**Response:** I agree about the importance of reviewing recruitment and retention practices. Last year, the Library struck a Diversity and Inclusion working group which was specifically tasked with creating two sets of informed recommendations: one set specifically targeted to recruitment and hiring practices, and a second set targeted to retention and developing an inclusive library. We have begun to implement the recommendations outlined in the initial report, and feel confident that this



will support the results I believe are being targeted with Recommendation Eleven of the external review.

**Recommendation Twelve:** Work with the University Librarian to explore the development of a library system-wide program to expose undergraduates to the library and information science profession as a career option. While this is a long-term strategy, it will serve to add much-needed professionals from historically under-represented populations to academic research libraries.

**Response:** Both I, and the University Librarian, believe that a preferred approach to encouraging undergraduates to the profession is leveraging existing programs that are offered through, for example, the Association of Research Libraries (e.g.: the Okanagan Library will be hosting an ARL Fellow for Digital and Inclusive Excellence in 2019-20) and continuing to provide mentorship opportunities to our library student employees, several of whom have pursued graduate studies in Library and Information Science over the past few years. We agree that it would also be beneficial to better communicate the successes in these areas to the campus community, to increase recognition of the opportunities that are available. The University Librarian has recently become an Associate Member of the Faculty of Library, Archival and Information Studies; we anticipate some relationship building on this level will help both libraries to further expose undergraduates to the profession while also offering more opportunities to mentor rising professionals.

Given limited availability of resources, I believe that the staff and faculty recruitment practices alluded to in Recommendation Eleven should be prioritized.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

**Recommendation Thirteen:** To address critical areas of need, it is essential that the University Librarian and Chief Librarian collaborate on the development of sustainable set of best practices for services that utilize the talent and expertise at both campuses.

**Response:** Agreed. Please see response to Recommendation Five, which addresses this recommendation. Both I and the University Librarian appreciate the time and thoughtfulness with which the reviewers approached their task; this review has helped us to see the benefit of taking a step back and has added further motivation to the prospect of working collaboratively to define and maximize the relationship between the two campus libraries.



<b>Document Control</b>		
Date	Revision	Issued For
20190710	A	Review by University Librarian
20190729	B	Incorporated comments from University Librarian. Review by Provost.