

IDEAS CAFÉ STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Vanier Library
Notes by Aurelia Roman
May 6, 2015

Q1 STRENGTHS

- Varied expertise
- Transformation well thought through
- Recognized by other universities as student-focused
- Commitment to serve grad students better with new facilities (phase 2)
- Current leadership
- Partnership with higher administration
- People strengths diversity
- Service orientated environment
- GradProskill
- Recognizing Webster space (11 types of zones for students!!)
- Enthusiasm for service
- Keeping tradition
- Starting to target areas of fundraising
- Openness to change, exciting times
- Open access (Spectrum, University press)
- Pushing out staff (from inside to outside)
- Future vision: Webster project; fundraiser
- Reserve room
- 24 h. open
- 11 environments, 3 zones, small rooms, couches, etc.
- Unknown jewel
- 'We are happy to serve you' attitude

Q2 MIND THE GAP

- Connect with other services
- Make it more welcoming
- Identify gaps, differentiate between 1st year students undergrads; graduates; 1st year MA and Phd students;
- We need to serve them based on their diverse needs and knowledge of the services
- Student Services Fund
- Find out what people are doing

- More services such as thesis boot camp
- Resources
- \$\$\$
- Time for creativity
- **Ideas labs**
- More reference
- **Face to face interaction**
- Staff development and engaging across silos

Q3. PREFERRED FUTURE

- ENGAGE with communities; other staff; researchers;
- Have a vision and work towards it strategically- we need resources to do that
- Accept that change is going to happen
- Top down initiatives (big projects) don't work on the ground- consult us!
- Can't see the future, can't see how we can bridge the gap
- Being receptive to change and innovation
- The gap between Administration and the staff is too high
- More opportunities like these to talk, collaborate, discuss
- Increase cross training
- Increase integration of services
- Have a common purpose
- What does it mean to serve the students?
- We need to know what is the big picture, be part of the change not being told what the change is going to be without our input
- Don't be stuck in the day to day routines- we need to know what is the vision?

Strategic Cafe for Library, Concordia University
Thurs, May 6, 2015
Vanier Library
(Notes by Tara Walker)

Question 1:

As a 21st Century university library what are we doing well? What should we build on?

Strengths:

- Public service – we do this well
- Human contact: the library staff support students and faculty through orientation to the library resources and to research more generally, provide individual attention ie. chat services and consultation, and support faculty ie. with electronic course reserves
- Providing a common space: it's an interdisciplinary space for all students regardless of faculty. "University needs this neutral space and the human contact". Common space: Makes cross-pollination possible.
- It is difficult to balance between innovation and legacy: so far Concordia is doing this well
- Library is a Quiet space for studying that is safe and free; it provides access to resources that support student's studies ie. the collections and various services like printing, scanning

Areas for potential improvement:

- Graduate student services: "grad students are not served as well as we could"
- Investment into services and into resources (ie. books) is diminishing and thus the value of the library to students is under threat

Question 2:

Mind the gap! Areas of improvement, what is missing, what is needed to achieve vision?

Services!

- Library introduction (orientation sessions covering all library services available to students)
- Promotion of collections
- Encouraging users to browse the stacks: they are missing out b/c of holds service
- More collaboration with other institutions: ie. BCI cards, Co-operative maintenance of collections in Montreal
- Misc. user services: Change machine, interact/email transfers to pay for fines/services
- Fines are too steep
- Food and drink in the library is a problem and garbage accumulates.
- Library is promoted as a place to study and to do group work.

- Graduate student services:
 - Study spaces
 - Resources lacking such as plug ins
 - More support with research from librarians
 - Space for innovation and creativity
 - Social space for studying in groups

Question 3:

What will the library become in next 10 years?

IT / knowledge management:

- Website improvements to help with delivery of info to students → already started
- Discovery layer (Google like) searches multiple databases simultaneously → will be of great help
- Linked data: authority, controlled vocabulary
- Need to make it easier for students to find what they need
- What happens to the stacks as digitization of books/journals continues?

Services:

- More flexible options w/ delivery → interlibrary loans / like the BCI collaboration but a seamless process (mentioned twice: Document delivery & interlibrary loans made easier for end users)
- Virtual shelf reading [permitting users to explore the stacks and find resources spontaneously]
- Adding librarians to be able to do all the work that needs to be done.

Facilities:

- Different kinds of spaces (for different purposes) → at Vanier too (not just Webster)!

Innovations:

- Should we rethink the structure? Flatter structure? Less silo'd
- Create: IDEAS LAB

Values [that will drive library in future]:

- users first!
- balance between students' needs (work to be done)
- collaboration and job sharing (no silos!)
- greater time to think and dream

Additional thoughts:

- There is a creative tension between user needs vs. materials needs (ie. collections development & proper knowledge management)
- We [Library staff] need time to think and dream → more dialogue / like a community of inquiry?
- We need to reach a base level to plan for the future

Strategic Café about the Future of the Libraries
Loyal Campus, May 6, 2015
Table Harvest Notes
Host: Dana

As a 21st Century university library what are we doing well? What should we build on?

- Our libraries are more than books
- Make collection and date more accessible, e.g. on-line
- Improve visibility of collection
- Build on research data management and research services
- Community! Services! Engagement! Access!!! Increasing visibility of collections!

- Engage with and step into our communities
- Be on top of trends, instead of catching up
- Build for the future; what will users want in the future?
- Create space (time and conditions) for innovation by engaging staff and users
- Build and allow for ideas to develop, in collaboration with co-workers, colleagues and peers
- Explore and develop creative ways to create space and conditions for innovations
- On-going Ideas Labs

How can we improve? What new services or functions should we be developing? What training or professional development do we need to support this?

- Gap between what was and what will be
- More visibility of what the Library can offer
- Librarians have gone from policing users to supporting them
- Strategic staffing is needed rather than more staff
- Fill vacant positions and reestablished cut positions
- We are under staffed

- More focus on services to users and listening to front-line staff
- More collaboration and co-development with service staff; more bottom-up policy and program development
- Break down the silos
- More flexibility within/without departments
- Increase knowledge of each staff about other aspects of the Library
- Shadow or trade places in order to develop deeper understanding and knowledge, and capacity to fill-in and replace staff on leave or absent
- Better training

Within the next 10 years, what would you like to see the libraries become? What values should guide our future selves?

- In 10 years from now, the Library will have the right amount of staff, in the right places and positions, with flexible positions to be able to move staff around and make full use of them.
- All parts of the Library will be collaborating with other departments, e.g. research centres
- Working in a very different way and with greater integration into the rest of the University
- Giving to larger community, outside of the Library, perhaps through collaborating with other departments, such as research centers
- Librarians and staff engaged in departments and research centers
- Library integrated into the community
- Tailored services for students
- Greater integration with students
- Digital collections: archives and specific collections
- Concordia University Press
- Expanded fundraising capacity, enabling more specific projects, e.g. digitized collection
- Better budget for collections, resources and staff, and predictable funding

Values

- Access to (for?) all
- Excellent service for students and faculty, and curatorship and preservation
- Responsible management of financial resources
- Foster collaborations between Library and outside the Library
- Development of staff and healthy, motivated and engaged workplace
- Have more to do that challenges and engages staff
- Strategic staffing; flexible positions

Concordia Libraries Strategic Café
Wednesday May 6 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm
Loyola- GE 110.00
Table Host: Rehab Mahmoud

Table Discussions
Data Transcription

Question One- Our Strengths:

As a 21st Century university library what are we doing well? What should we build on?

- We are organized.
- We provide excellent user services.
- We listen to the students (e.g. the suggestion box is take seriously/ posted on website).
- We also consult with students (e.g. the furniture renovation initiative).
- Flexible with our resources; we stretch our dollar/ make the most of our budgets.
- Provide access to users.
- Spectrum.
- ILL Services and Document Delivery.
- Discovery Service.
- PDA: Patron Driven Acquisitions.
- E-books.
- Build on: 24/7 service/work?
- Build on: Group study Rooms; would be good to have more.
- Build on: Expand services (e.g. Virtual reference hours, chat services).

Question Two- Mind the Gap:

How can we improve? What new services or functions should we be developing?

What training or professional development do we need to support this?

- Support academic research (e.g. Data Management Software)
- Provide services to support students to produce multi-media, not only papers and/or presentations.
- Support faculty in terms of new digital technology.
- Create links with ACSD to assist students with disabilities.
- Be trend setter, not following the wave.
- Digitization of unique and special collections and services attached (manage digital objects, share resources software).
- Move beyond day-to-day thinking into thinking strategically.
- Capture ideas and initiatives.
- Need to break the silos and work in more collaboration within the libraries.
- Break the inherent isolation of the libraries from the rest of Concordia university.
- We are stuck in the old ways.
- Find ways to reduce librarian workload regarding book selection, cataloguing.
- Develop more efficient workflows/ overcome redundancy of task.
- Structure (and funding) to assist with new projects; Opportunity to collaborate with each other. No time in librarian schedules to do that kind of work.
- Expand special collection team
- Create ways to embed change in the positions of staff/ librarians to evolve; to motivate staff; to engage them and help improve the quality of their lives.

- It is a question of engagement.
- Think of a mechanism to support engagement, collaboration and innovation (e.g. potentially have ideas cafes on regular basis).

Question Three- Our Preferred Future:

Within the next 10 years, what would you like to see the libraries become? What values should guide our future selves?

- Students are more engaged with libraries (may be participation credits).
- Develop students awareness of the services offered/ featured services of the university.
- Library education across disciplines.
- Concordia libraries have more resource and book collection.
- Librarian as mentors.
- Practical support to students of disciplines like arts and theatre.
- Partner with graduate students in research.
- Develop physical space (e.g. colours?, Vending machine?, Coffee?). May be the idea of a café reading.
- Students access to special collection.
- Endowment fund of \$ 1 Billion
- Value: tradition (books) and Legacy (Paper and Pen).
- Value: life-long learning.
- Value: Diversity. Support diversity (e.g. students with disabilities).
- Value: Concordia's libraries Services are characterised by human interaction

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Note Taker: Rehab Mahmoud

Community Final Discussion (Popcorn Harvest)
Data Transcription

What? What stands out for you from these conversations?

- Push and pull between tradition and change.
- Traditions that library hold by nature (e.g. books).
- Diverse perspective; a question of how to reconcile the different, sometimes opposite, points of view.
- Capture staff ideas, even when different.
- No matter how much librarians are digitized, human interaction is still valuable.
- *Service* and *relationship* are at the heart of being for libraries.
- Silos within the library and the library with the community of Concordia.
- Librarian mentorship to students.
- Students awareness; how to engage students?
- How to bring 1st year students to the library potentially through library assignments, a professor bringing the students to the library, or including library work as part of the curriculum.

So what? What does this say about the Libraries' future strategic directions?

- Library having a bigger voice/ influence.
- More partnerships.

- Students awareness- make it more personal.
- Students engagement with libraries.
- Diversity of services to meet different needs and different styles of disciplines.
- Vanier follows Webster.
- Services to graduate students and partner in academic research.
- Funding; money for resources.

---End---